United Nations E/CN.5/2017/1

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
25 November 2016

Original: English

Commission for Social Development
Fifty-fifth session
1-10 February 2017
Item 2 of the provisional agenda
Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters

Provisional annotated agenda and proposed organization of work

Provisional agenda

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
3. Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly:
   (a) Priority theme: strategies for eradicating poverty to achieve sustainable development for all;
   (b) Review of relevant United Nations plans and programmes of action pertaining to the situation of social groups:
      (i) World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons;
      (ii) Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities;
      (iii) World Programme of Action for Youth;
      (iv) Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002;
      (v) Family issues, policies and programmes;
   (c) Emerging issues: promoting integrated policies for poverty eradication: youth development in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
4. Programme questions and other matters:
   (a) Proposed programme of work for the biennium 2018-2019;
   (b) United Nations Research Institute for Social Development.
5. Provisional agenda for the fifty-sixth session of the Commission.
6. Adoption of the report of the Commission on its fifty-fifth session.

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Annotations

1. Election of officers

Rule 15 of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council stipulates that, at the commencement of the first meeting of a regular session, the Commission shall elect from among the representatives of its members a Chair, one or more Vice-Chairs and such other officers as may be required. Following the established practice, the Commission shall elect a Chair and four Vice-Chairs and also designate one of the Vice-Chairs as Rapporteur. In subparagraph (c) of its decision 2002/210, the Economic and Social Council decided that, immediately following the closure of a regular session, the Commission for Social Development would hold the first meeting of its subsequent regular session for the sole purpose of electing the new Chair and other members of the Bureau. In its resolution 2016/6, the Council reaffirmed that the officers elected to the Bureau of the Commission would continue to be elected for a term of office of two years, in parallel with the 2017-2018 review and policy cycle. Accordingly, the Commission held the first meeting of its fifty-fifth session on 12 February 2016, immediately following the closure of the fifty-fourth session, and elected by acclamation Elisabeta David (Romania) and Ana Sandoval (Paraguay) as Vice-Chairs of the fifty-fifth and fifty-sixth sessions and Brian Bowler (Malawi) as Vice-Chair of the fifty-fifth session of the Commission. At the same meeting, the Commission postponed the election of the Chair from the Western European and other States and the Vice-Chair from the Asia-Pacific States.

Subsequently, the African States nominated Lot Dzonzi (Malawi) to replace Brian Bowler in representing the regional group on the Bureau as Vice-Chair, and the Asia-Pacific States nominated Alanoud al-Temimi (Qatar) as Vice-Chair from that regional group.

On 1 February 2017, the Commission will elect the Chair and Vice-Chairs and will designate one of its Vice-Chairs as also having rapporteurial responsibilities.

2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters

Rule 7 of the rules of procedure requires that, after the election of its officers at the beginning of each session, the Commission shall adopt the agenda for that session on the basis of the provisional agenda. The provisional agenda and documentation for the fifty-fifth session of the Commission were approved by the Economic and Social Council in its decision 2016/225.

The proposed organization of work of the Commission at its fifty-fifth session (see annex I) has been prepared pursuant to relevant decisions of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council to facilitate the consideration of agenda items within the time frame available and in accordance with the conference services allocated to the Commission. The timetable should be considered tentative and indicative: if the Commission completes its consideration of an item ahead of schedule, it may wish to proceed immediately to the next item.

The Commission is scheduled to meet from Wednesday, 1 February, to Friday, 10 February 2017. Arrangements have been made to hold morning and afternoon meetings during the session: morning meetings will be held from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and afternoon meetings from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Documentation

Provisional annotated agenda and proposed organization of work (E/CN.5/2017/1)

3. Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly

In accordance with General Assembly resolution 55/46 on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the Assembly entitled "World Summit for Social Development and beyond: achieving social development for all in a globalizing world", the Commission will undertake regular assessment of the implementation of the Copenhagen commitments and the further initiatives adopted in Geneva.

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General on the social dimensions of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (E/CN.5/2017/2)

(a) Priority theme: strategies for eradicating poverty to achieve sustainable development for all

In its resolution 2016/6, the Economic and Social Council decided that the priority theme for the 2017-2018 review and policy cycle would be "Strategies for eradicating poverty to achieve sustainable development for all". The Commission will review the theme in 2017, at its fifty-fifth session, and will complete the biennial cycle by adopting action-oriented policy recommendations on strategies for the eradication of poverty to achieve sustainable development for all at its fifty-sixth session, in 2018. The Commission will have before it the report of the Secretary-General on the priority theme.

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General on strategies for the eradication of poverty to achieve sustainable development for all (E/CN.5/2017/3)

(b) Review of relevant United Nations plans and programmes of action pertaining to the situation of social groups

(i) World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons

(ii) Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities

(iii) World Programme of Action for Youth

(iv) Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002

(v) Family issues, policies and programmes

The Commission will consider issues pertaining to the situation of social groups.

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General on mainstreaming disability in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (E/CN.5/2017/4)

Report of the Secretary-General on policies and programmes involving youth (E/CN.5/2017/5)

Report of the Secretary-General on the third review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing: preliminary assessment (E/CN.5/2017/6)

(c) Emerging issues: promoting integrated policies for poverty eradication: youth development in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

In its resolution 2006/18, the Economic and Social Council decided to include the agenda item entitled "Emerging issues" in the programme of work of the Commission. The members of the Bureau, in consultation with their respective regional groups, agreed that the theme for discussion under this agenda item during the fifty-fifth session would be "Promoting integrated policies for poverty eradication: youth development in the 2030 Agenda". A note by the Secretariat will be available to facilitate the discussion.

Documentation

Note by the Secretariat entitled "Emerging issues: promoting integrated policies for poverty eradication: youth development in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" (E/CN.5/2017/7)

4. Programme questions and other matters

(a) Proposed programme of work for the biennium 2018-2019

The Commission will have before it the proposed strategic framework of the Secretariat for the period 2018-2019 in the field of social development.

Documentation

Conference room paper on subprogramme 2, Social policy and development, of programme 7, Economic and social affairs, of the proposed strategic framework for the period 2018-2019 (E/CN.5/2017/CRP.1)

(b) United Nations Research Institute for Social Development

Nomination of members of the Board of the Institute

The Board of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development is composed of 10 members, who are nominated by the Commission and confirmed by the Economic and Social Council for a term of four years, renewable once for a further two years, in accordance with Commission resolution 10 (XXV).

The Commission, at its fifty-fifth session, will be called upon to nominate a number of new members and to renominate some existing members of the Board. The Council will be called upon to confirm those nominated in 2017.

Documentation

Note by the Secretary-General on the nomination of members of the Board of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (E/CN.5/2017/9)

Report of the Board of the Institute

In accordance with its terms of reference, the Board of the Institute submits to the Commission a report on the progress of its work. The Commission will have before it the report of the Board covering the biennium 2018-2019.

Documentation

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Board of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (E/CN.5/2017/8)

5. Provisional agenda for the fifty-sixth session of the Commission

In accordance with rule 9 of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council, the Commission will have before it the draft provisional agenda for its fifty-sixth session, together with an indication of the documentation to be submitted for its consideration.

Documentation

Draft provisional agenda for the fifty-sixth session of the Commission (E/CN.5/2017/L.1)[1]

6. Adoption of the report of the Commission on its fifty-fifth session

In accordance with rule 37 of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Council, the Commission shall submit to the Council a report on the work of its fifty-fifth session.

Documentation

Draft report of the Commission on its fifty-fifth session (E/CN.5/2017/L.2)[1]

[1] To be issued as an in-session document.

Annex I

Proposed organization of work (1-10 February 2017)

Date	*Agenda item*	*Documentation programme*
Week of 1-3 February 2017		
Wednesday, 1 February		
a.m.	1. Election of officers	
	2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters	Provisional annotated agenda and proposed organization of work (E/CN.5/2017/1)
	3. Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly	Introduction of documentation under agenda item 3, including its sub-items (a) and (b) Report of the Secretary-General on the social dimensions of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (E/CN.5/2017/2)
	(a) Priority theme: strategies for eradicating poverty to achieve sustainable development for all	Report of the Secretary-General on strategies for eradicating poverty to achieve sustainable development for all (E/CN.5/2017/3)
	(b) Review of relevant United Nations plans and programmes of action pertaining to the situation of social groups	
	(i) World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons	Report of the Secretary-General on mainstreaming disability in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (E/CN.5/2017/4)
	(ii) Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities	
	(iii) World Programme of Action for Youth	Report of the Secretary-General on policies and programmes involving youth (E/CN.5/2017/5)
	(iv) Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002	Report of the Secretary-General on the third review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing: preliminary assessment (E/CN.5/2017/6)

Date	*Agenda item*	*Documentation programme*
	(v) Family issues, policies and programmes	
	(c) Emerging issues: promoting integrated policies for poverty eradication: youth development in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development	Note by the Secretariat entitled "Emerging issues: promoting integrated policies for poverty eradication: youth development in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" (E/CN.5/2017/7)
		Presentation of the outcome of the civil society forum held on 3-31 January 2017
		Presentation by a youth representative
	3 (a) (*continued*)	General discussion begins
p.m.	3 (a) (*continued*)	High-level panel discussion on item 3 (a)
Thursday, 2 February		
a.m.	3 (c) (*continued*)	High-level panel discussion on item 3 (c)
p.m.	3 (a) (*continued*)	General discussion
Friday, 3 February		
a.m.	3 (b) (*continued*)	High-level panel discussion on the topic "Leaving no one behind: poverty and disability"
p.m.	3 (b) (*continued*)	General discussion
Week of 6-10 February 2017		
Monday, 6 February		
a.m.	3 (a) (*continued*)	General discussion
	3 (b) (*continued*)	General discussion
p.m.	4. Programme questions and other matters	
	(a) Proposed programme of work for the biennium 2018-2019	Conference room paper on subprogramme 2, Social policy and development, of programme 7, Economic and social affairs, of the proposed strategic framework for the period 2018-2019 (E/CN.5/2017/CRP.1)

Date	*Agenda item*	*Documentation programme*
	(b) United Nations Research Institute for Social Development	Note by the Secretary-General on the nomination of members of the Board of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (E/CN.5/2017/9)
		Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Board of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (E/CN.5/2017/8)
	3 (b) (*continued*)	General discussion
Tuesday, 7 February		
a.m.	3 (a) and (b)	Informal consultations
		(*no plenary meeting*)
p.m.	3 (a) and (b)	Informal consultations
		(*no plenary meeting*)
		5 p.m.: deadline for submission of draft proposals
Wednesday, 8 February		
a.m.	3 (a) and (b)	Informal consultations
		(*no plenary meeting*)
p.m.	3 (a) and (b)	Informal consultations
		(*no plenary meeting*)
Thursday, 9 February		
a.m.	3 (a) and (b)	Informal consultations
		(*no plenary meeting*)
p.m.	3 (a) and (b)	Informal consultations
		(*no plenary meeting*)
Friday, 10 February		
a.m.	3 (a) and (b)	Introduction of draft proposals
		Action on draft proposals
p.m.	3 (a) and (b)	Introduction of proposals
		Action on proposals

Date	*Agenda item*	*Documentation programme*
	5. Provisional agenda for the fifty-sixth session of the Commission	Adoption of the provisional agenda for the next session
	6. Adoption of the report of the Commission on its fifty-fifth session	Adoption of the report
		Closure of the session[a]

[a] In accordance with Economic and Social Council decision 2002/210, the Commission, immediately following the closure of the fifty-fifth session, will hold the first meeting of its fifty-sixth session for the sole purpose of electing the new Chair and other members of the Bureau, in accordance with rule 15 of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Council. In accordance with Council resolution 2016/6, the officers elected to the Bureau of the Commission for the fifty-fifth and fifty-sixth sessions have been elected for a two-year term.

Annex II

Membership of the Commission for Social Development at its fifty-fifth session (2017)

(46 members; four-year term)

Membership of the fifty-fifth session	*Term expires at close of session in the year*
Algeria	2019
Argentina	2017
Austria	2019
Bangladesh	2020
Benin	2019
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	2019
Brazil	2017
Burundi	2019
Chile	2017
China	2017
Colombia	2019
Democratic Republic of the Congo	2017
El Salvador	2020
Finland	2017
France	2017
Ghana	2020
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	2019
Iraq	2019
Japan	2020
Kuwait	2017
Madagascar	2017
Malawi	2017
Mexico	2019

Membership of the fifty-fifth session	*Term expires at close of session in the year*
Namibia	2019
Pakistan	2017
Paraguay	2020
Peru	2020
Poland	2017
Portugal	2019
Qatar	2019
Republic of Korea	2020
Republic of Moldova	2020
Romania	2017
Russian Federation	2020
Rwanda	2020
Switzerland	2017
Turkmenistan	2017
Uganda	2017
United States of America	2020

United Nations E/CN.5/2017/2

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
22 November 2016

Original: English

Commission for Social Development
Fifty-fifth session
1-10 February 2017
Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly

Social dimensions of the New Partnership for Africa's Development

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The report is submitted pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 2016/7 to review progress made in the social dimensions of the New Partnership for Africa's Development. Examined herein is progress in eradicating poverty, reducing hunger and inequality, enhancing food security, improving education and health outcomes, creating jobs and promoting women's empowerment and gender equality and peace, security and good governance. Also discussed is the importance of mobilizing financial resources for inclusive development. Policy recommendations for the accelerated and sustained development of Africa are provided.

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I. Introduction

1. Since its inception, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) has played a critical role in promoting development in Africa and the continent's integration into the world economy. It has also helped to shift the discourse on the continent from Afro-pessimism to one that recognizes the exciting and immense opportunities available there. It is on the success of NEPAD and other continental initiatives that the African political leadership seeks a prosperous, peaceful, secure, united and regionally integrated continent. The success of NEPAD and the lessons learned in its implementation are serving as a springboard for the African Union's Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, which reflects an ambitious effort by Africans to take greater ownership of national development efforts and chart a new direction for a future that is underpinned by sustained and inclusive growth and the eradication of poverty.

2. In addition, the international community has been seized by the formulation of a new global development agenda, which culminated in the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This global agenda reaffirms the commitment of the international community to supporting the special needs of Africa, as reflected in Agenda 2063 and the programme of action of NEPAD. The objectives of these international and regional development frameworks are complementary in their aspiration for an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa.

II. Progress in eradicating poverty and reducing inequality

3. Recent World Bank estimates indicate that, in Africa, the proportion of people living on less than $1.90 a day (based on 2011 purchasing power prices) in 2013 stood at 39 per cent, compared with 51 per cent in 1990.[1] The poverty rate in sub-Saharan Africa fell from 54 per cent in 1990 to 41 per cent in 2013. Owing to rapid population growth and the slow pace of poverty reduction, the number of people living in extreme poverty increased from 276 million to 389 million over this period, making sub-Saharan Africa the subregion with the largest share of poor people in the world.

4. The continent's progress in reducing poverty was driven by notable efforts towards reaching the Millennium Development Goals, supported by its strong economic growth over the past 15 years. On average, the growth of gross domestic product (GDP) more than doubled from just above 2 per cent during the 1990s to above 5 per cent between 2001 and 2014 thanks largely to a surge in international prices of natural resources and commodities.[2] Nine sub-Saharan African countries were among the fastest-growing countries in the world, with annual economic growth above 6 per cent in 2014. Unfortunately, the enclave nature of the sectors involved — extractive or export-based industry dominated by foreign capital — has not generated sufficient jobs. In addition, these sectors tend to benefit only the richest. Consequently, the high economic growth of African countries has very often

[1] See http://iresearch.worldbank.org/PovcalNet/index.htm?1.

[2] African Development Bank, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and United Nations Development Programme, *African Economic Outlook 2016: Sustainable Cities and Structural Transformation* (Paris, OECD Publishing, 2016).

exacerbated inequalities and in some cases worsened poverty. Moreover, progress in reducing poverty may be affected by the slowdown in the continent's economic growth since 2014 owing to weaker global demand for commodities, which has lowered their prices.

5. The decline in the poverty rate in Africa was much slower than progress made at the global level or in other major regions that had similar levels of poverty in 1990 — Eastern Asia and the Pacific and Southern Asia. The proportion of the global population living on less than $1.90 a day fell to 10.7 per cent in 2013, from 35 per cent in 1990. Sub-Saharan Africa still has the highest concentration of extreme poverty, with 51 per cent of the world's poor living in the subregion in 2013.

6. Furthermore, for those living in poverty, the average consumption level is considerably lower in sub-Saharan Africa — only about $0.70 a day per person — than in other subregions. When this extreme depth of poverty is taken into account, not only is the poverty rate much higher in sub-Saharan Africa than is indicated by the traditional poverty rate, but also the concentration of poverty leans further towards the subcontinent. World Bank projections also show that, were incomes at the country level to rise at the same average rate observed in Africa during the 20-year period from 1994 to 2013, slightly more than a quarter of the population would still be living in extreme poverty in 2030.[3]

7. Some African countries also have the highest levels of inequality in the world. These high levels, which pertain to both inequality of outcomes and inequality of opportunities, continue to undermine efforts to reduce poverty and foster inclusive growth. Income inequality within countries, as measured by the Gini index of the distribution of income, is higher in Africa (0.43) than in the rest of the developing world (0.39).[4] The Gini indices of 30 African countries are above the median index for all developing countries. The continent's high income inequality is also seen in the great income gap between the richest and the poorest segments of its population: on average, the income of its richest 20 per cent is more than 10 times that of its poorest 20 per cent. For other developing countries, this ratio is, on average, below 9.

8. Six of the nine most unequal countries in the world are in Africa.[5] They place the continent's average income inequality level above that of the rest of the developing world. Excluding these countries leads to an average income inequality value for Africa — 0.40 — that is on a par with the average for other developing regions.

9. Besides income inequality, other dimensions of inequality remain high in Africa. Gender inequality, as measured by the gender inequality index, remains generally high in sub-Saharan Africa and, overall, this subregion has the second-

[3] World Bank, *Poverty and Shared Prosperity 2016: Taking on Inequality* (Washington, D.C., World Bank Group, 2016).

[4] Haroon Bhorat, Karmen Naidoo and Kavisha Pillay, "Growth, poverty and inequality interactions in Africa: an overview of key issues" (United Nations Development Programme, Regional Bureau for Africa, Inequality Project, 2016), Working Paper Series, vol. 1, No. 1.

[5] According to the World Bank world development indicators (distribution of income or consumption). Available from http://wdi.worldbank.org/table/2.9.

highest level after the Middle East and North Africa.[6] In addition, socioeconomic inequalities in education, health and access to decent employment remain pervasive. Some groups of the population cannot afford to pay for basic public goods and services. They also have limited access to services owing to a lack of adequate infrastructure, especially in rural and remote areas. Some of the socioeconomic disadvantages faced by these groups are due to a lack of basic education and good health knowledge and practices, legal restrictions and poor service delivery. Some groups continue to adhere to unfavourable social norms that tend to perpetuate poverty, such as those around gender roles, adolescent marriage and reproductive ideals.

10. For example, children living in poor households, whose mothers have very low education levels, or who live in rural areas, have lower educational attainment and learning outcomes and face higher risks of malnutrition and death in childhood. They also have lower chances of being enrolled in school, receiving skilled attendance at birth and immunizations and having access to safe drinking water and sanitation, all of which highlight the challenges of inequitable opportunities. In the late 2000s and early 2010s, the gap in standardized mathematics test scores between children from the poorest and the richest households was at least 20 percentage points in many countries. It even exceeded 50 percentage points in Gabon and South Africa.[3]

11. Among children whose mothers had no education, around 12 per cent died before reaching 5 years of age, compared with about 4 per cent among those whose mothers had completed secondary school.[7] In 2015, the proportion of people using an improved water source was more than 40 percentage points higher in urban than in rural areas in Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Madagascar and the Niger.[8] Lastly, legal restrictions in sub-Saharan Africa that prevent women from taking advantage of formal financial institutions for economic activities are the most stringent in the world and estimated to account for as much as 5 percentage points of the gender difference in labour market participation in some countries of the subregion.[6]

12. Income-related and gender-related inequalities have been shown to impede economic growth in sub-Saharan Africa, especially in low-income countries. If inequalities in sub-Saharan Africa could be reduced to the levels currently observed in a group of fast-growing emerging countries in South-Eastern Asia, the growth of the subregion's annual per capita GDP would be higher by 0.9 percentage points.[6] Unfortunately, income inequality has not, on average, changed much in the subregion during the past 15 years of high economic growth, although trends vary by country. In as many as one third of the countries for which data are available, including Ghana, Rwanda and Uganda, economic growth was accompanied by increases in income inequality from 1995 to 2011.

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[6] International Monetary Fund (IMF), *Regional Economic Outlook: Sub-Saharan Africa — Dealing with the Gathering Clouds* (Washington, D.C., 2015).

[7] Tim Heaton and others, "Social inequality and children's health in Africa: a cross-sectional study", *International Journal for Equity in Health*, vol. 15, No. 92 (June 2016).

[8] African Union and others, *MDGs to Agenda 2063/SDGs: Transition Report 2016 — Towards an Integrated and Coherent Approach to Sustainable Development in Africa* (Addis Ababa, Economic Commission for Africa, 2016).

13. By contrast, other low-income countries were able to reduce income inequality and significantly improve the living conditions of the poorest segment of their populations between the early 2000s and the early 2010s. The Gini index fell from 0.40 to 0.33 between 2001 and 2011 in Mali and from 0.39 to 0.36 between 2001 and 2012 in the United Republic of Tanzania. In those two low-income countries, the decline in income inequality was driven by faster growth in consumption accruing to the poorest households relative to consumption among the richest households.[5] As far as trends in gender equality are concerned, improvements in gender gaps in education, health outcomes and economic rights have been observed in recent years in sub-Saharan Africa. Gender inequality, however, has declined more slowly than in other areas.[6]

14. The experiences of countries that have been able to reduce both poverty and inequality, especially those that are not rich in resources, show that Africa needs to go through structural transformation to effectively reduce poverty, create employment and combat inequality. Political, economic and fiscal policies that encompass ending armed conflicts, establishing a stable macroeconomic environment, undertaking microeconomic reforms, reducing inflation, broadening the tax base and raising tax collection and diversifying the economy can boost economic growth. To lead to sustainable and inclusive growth, however, they need to be accompanied by social policies that improve human capital, harness the demographic dividend and reduce vulnerability and social exclusion. Inclusive policies include improving the coverage and quality of education and health care, increasing access to family planning, providing better infrastructure and basic services, especially in rural areas, and expanding social protection coverage,[3] paying particular attention to women, young people, older persons and persons with disabilities.

III. Progress in reducing hunger and improving food security

15. Africa has made advances in efforts to combat hunger. From 1990-1992 to 2014-2016, the continent's prevalence of undernutrition — the proportion of undernourished people — fell from 27.6 to 20 per cent.[9] While the prevalence of undernutrition in Northern Africa did not change significantly from its initial low level (less than 5 per cent), that of sub-Saharan Africa declined from 33.2 to 23.2 per cent. All subregions south of the Sahara achieved progress, except Middle Africa where the prevalence of undernutrition increased from 33.5 to 41.3 per cent and the number of undernourished people more than doubled during the same period. Western Africa made the most remarkable progress of all subregions, notwithstanding the rapid population growth and recurrent droughts in Sahelian countries. Between 1990-1992 and 2014-2016, the prevalence of undernutrition fell to 9.6 from 24.2 per cent, while the number of undernourished people fell by 13 million.

[9] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development and World Food Programme, *The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2015: Meeting the 2015 International Hunger Targets — Taking Stock of Uneven Progress* (Rome, FAO, 2015).

16. Nonetheless, Africa remains the region with the highest level of hunger and food insecurity in the world and the number of its undernourished people is on the rise. From 1990-1992 to 2014-2016, the number increased from 181.7 million to 232.5 million, with sub-Saharan Africa accounting for the great majority — 87.2 per cent — of the increase. Based on the Global Hunger Index, the state of hunger in 2015 was alarming in 6 countries — the Central African Republic, Chad, Zambia, Sierra Leone, Madagascar and the Niger — and considered to be serious in 30 more.[8]

17. The continent's population also continues to be disproportionately affected by widespread malnutrition, a major cause of poor health and educational outcomes, productivity loss and death. In 2015, 32 per cent of children under 5 years of age were stunted and 12 to 20 per cent were underweight, on average.[10] Africa has made very slow progress on child malnutrition compared with other regions. Between 2000 and 2015, child stunting rates in Africa were reduced by only one sixth, compared with more than one third in Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean. In absolute terms, the number of children under 5 years of age who are stunted rose from 50 million in 2000 to 58 million in 2015, with Western Africa accounting for half of the increase.

18. Several major challenges undermine progress towards food and nutrition security in Africa. These include extreme weather events (chronic drought and flooding) resulting from climate change, soil degradation, conflicts and political instability, rapid population growth, soaring and volatile food prices and inadequate investment in agriculture. With 65 per cent of the continent's population living in rural areas and relying on agriculture for subsistence, agriculture-led growth has been recognized by African countries and their development partners as critical to eradicating poverty and enhancing food security and nutrition. Improvements in agriculture also foster job creation and inclusive growth. To this end, the sector requires greater public investment in research and development, training, infrastructure, high-yielding crop varieties and fertilizers and better access to markets and financial services. Gains in these areas will increase the productivity and competitiveness of smallholder farmers, who produce as much as 90 per cent of the agricultural output in Africa.

19. In the Maputo Declaration on Agriculture and Food Security in Africa, adopted in 2003, Heads of State and Government of the African Union committed themselves to implementing the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme. They also committed themselves to allocating at least 10 per cent of national budgets to agriculture and, through the Programme, to achieving an average annual agricultural growth rate of 6 per cent. In 2008, in the Declaration on Responding to the Challenges of High Food Prices and Agriculture Development, African leaders committed themselves to further scaling up investment for agricultural research and technology development and transfer.

20. Since the implementation of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme in 2003, notable progress has been made in the agricultural sector. Agricultural planning has improved, with 28 of 54 countries

[10] United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), World Health Organization (WHO) and World Bank Group, "Joint child malnutrition estimates: key findings of the 2016 edition — levels and trends in child malnutrition" (New York, UNICEF; Geneva, WHO; Washington, D.C., World Bank, 2016).

having developed national agricultural investment plans. Average public agricultural expenditure also rose by 7 per cent per year across Africa, and the profile of agriculture has been elevated at the national, regional and global levels.[11] In fact, the remarkable progress made by Western Africa in improving food security compared with other subregions is associated with greater efforts to implement the Programme and to invest extensively in regional and national programmes and projects for agricultural development.[12]

21. Those improvements notwithstanding, most African countries have been unable to reach the Programme's agricultural investment and productivity targets during the first decade. For example, only 13 have met the target of allocating a minimum of 10 per cent of public expenditure to the agricultural sector in any year, with only 7 of them meeting the target in most years.[13] Few countries have achieved the target of an average annual agricultural growth rate of 6 per cent. Consequently, the potential for sustainable agricultural development to have significant effects on poverty reduction, better nutrition and health that has been observed in other regions, such as Asia, has in general yet to be seen in Africa. Exceptions include Ethiopia, where agricultural policies funded by a relatively high share of the government budget for agriculture (13.5 per cent in 2013) had positive, strong effects on consumption and poverty reduction, especially in rural areas.[14]

22. In 2014, African leaders recommitted themselves to the principles and values of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme and adopted three declarations, including the Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods. These declarations reconfirmed that agriculture should remain a high priority on the development agenda of the continent and that an agriculture-led growth was critical for socioeconomic inclusion and poverty and hunger eradication. African leaders resolved to maintain their earlier commitments to allocate at least 10 per cent of public expenditure to agriculture, end hunger in Africa by 2025 and, to that end, accelerate agricultural growth by at least doubling current agricultural productivity while ensuring that agricultural growth and the transformation process were inclusive and contributed at least 50 per cent to the overall poverty reduction target. The Malabo Declaration also contained specific commitments to improving nutritional status, in particular reducing child stunting to 10 per cent and

[11] NEPAD Business Foundation, *The Official NEPAD Yearbook 2015* (Johannesburg, Media and Communications, 2016).

[12] FAO, *Regional Overview of Food Security in Africa: African Food Security Prospects Brighter than Ever* (Accra, 2015).

[13] Samuel Benin and Bingxin Yu, *Complying with the Maputo Declaration Target: Trends in Public Agricultural Expenditures and Implications for Pursuit of Optimal Allocation of Public Agricultural Spending*, Regional Strategic Analysis and Knowledge Support Systems Annual Trends and Outlook Report 2012 (Washington, D.C., International Food Policy Research Institute, 2013).

[14] Emerta A. Aragie, Jean Balié and Scott McDonald, "Investment in agricultural productivity versus rural commercialization: which way to rapid poverty reduction in Ethiopia?", paper presented at the technical workshop on rural transformation, agricultural and food system transition, FAO headquarters, Rome, September 2016.

underweight to 5 per cent by 2025 and accelerating progress in preventing child and maternal deaths.[15]

23. To lead to successful socioeconomic development, it is imperative that the continent's structural transformation be driven by productivity gains in agriculture. This includes modernizing smallholder family farming to increase productivity and enhancing access to markets, credit and agricultural value chains. Trade and regional integration should also be enhanced, given the current huge commercial potential of the continent's domestic food market driven by high population growth, urbanization and rising income levels. At the national level, political commitment, improved governance, public-private partnerships and an enabling environment are necessary to enhance the contribution of agriculture to broad-based growth, poverty eradication and the reduction of hunger.

IV. Progress in productive employment and decent work creation

24. The remarkable economic growth seen in Africa over the past 15 years has been driven by capital-intensive sectors and exports of primary commodities. Consequently, unemployment, underemployment and informality have remained its key challenges, the swift growth notwithstanding. The region has the youngest population in the world, with more than 226 million people between 15 and 24 years of age.[16] That some 10 million young people enter the workforce every year calls for a sustained and equitable economic growth that can generate sufficient jobs to reduce unemployment, in particular youth unemployment.[17] Job-rich growth had been proved to be a pathway to sustaining a reduction in both poverty and inequality.

25. In sub-Saharan Africa, unemployment slightly increased to 7.4 per cent in 2015 from 7.3 per cent in 2014. This rate rose to 8.5 from 8.4 per cent among women and to 6.4 from 6.2 per cent among men over the same period. Meanwhile, the labour force participation rate stood at 70.9 per cent in 2014, the highest in the world. Nevertheless, levels of vulnerable employment remain pervasive in sub-Saharan Africa, accounting for almost 70 per cent of the total employed population. In Northern Africa, more than a third of workers are in vulnerable employment. In comparison, the global average is 46.3 per cent. In sub-Saharan Africa, the vast majority of the working population is in informal employment, with women making up the larger proportion. Informal employment mostly entails low-skilled jobs with low pay, high risks and no social protection. An estimated 34.3 per cent of the employed population in sub-Saharan Africa lives on less than $1.90 a day. Youth unemployment has also remained a critical challenge, increasing from

[15] Namukolo Covic and Sheryl L. Hendriks, eds., *Achieving a Nutrition Revolution for Africa: The Road to Healthier Diets and Optimal Nutrition*, Regional Strategic Analysis and Knowledge Support Systems Annual Trends and Outlook Report 2015 (Washington, D.C., International Food Policy Research Institute, 2016).

[16] United Nations, "Youth population trends and sustainable development", *Population Facts*, No. 2015/1, May 2015.

[17] Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa, *Africa Agriculture Status Report 2015: Youth in Agriculture in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Nairobi, 2015).

10.9 per cent in 2014 to 11.1 per cent in 2015. There were also gender differences — 12.5 per cent among young women and 9.8 per cent among young men in 2015.[18]

26. In Northern Africa, although the unemployment rate remains the highest globally, it fell slightly from 12.5 per cent in 2014 to 12.1 per cent in 2015, indicating improved labour market conditions. Youth unemployment is also the highest in the world, standing at 30 per cent in 2015. The labour force participation rate remains chronically low, at 48.2 per cent. It is the lowest in the world, largely owing to the low participation rates among women and young people, at 22.5 and 31.9 per cent, respectively, in 2015.

27. High levels of youth unemployment remain a serious political and socioeconomic challenge, the strong growth performance of many African countries notwithstanding. Tackling this problem is therefore an urgent task for policymakers. Agenda 2063 is intended to speed up action to support young people as drivers of the continent's renaissance, with priority accorded to harnessing the demographic dividend through investment in high-quality health care, education services, access to technology, opportunities and capital and concerted strategies to combat youth unemployment and underemployment. It is also intended to raise the standards of higher education to enhance the mobility of African young people and talent throughout the continent by 2025.

28. African young people face social and economic challenges that prevent them from realizing their full potential. Countries need to create decent work opportunities for them and design policies that provide them with access to and opportunities to participate in development processes, including in the implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda at the national level. Young people must also be equipped with the right skills for the job market. The growing youth bulge can be an asset only if countries are able to tap into the potential and creativity of young people and gainfully engage them. This entails designing evidence-based, youth-responsive plans and policies. Countries also need to provide adequate incentives and support entrepreneurship, including micro, small and medium-sized enterprises.

29. Given that most young people live in rural areas, agriculture can provide opportunities for youth employment, reducing migration to urban areas. The Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme is focused on youth education and employment in agriculture. Furthermore, commitments were made in the Malabo Declaration to creating job opportunities for at least 30 per cent of young people in agricultural value chains and supporting preferential entry and participation for women and young people in gainful and attractive agribusiness opportunities. In 2015, NEPAD, in partnership with the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, launched a four-year project to create decent employment opportunities for young women and men in rural areas through the development of rural enterprises in sustainable agriculture and agribusiness along strategic value chains.[19]

[18] International Labour Organization, *World Employment Social Outlook: Trends 2016* (Geneva, 2016).

[19] See www.nepad.org/content/nepad-and-fao-launch-rural-youth-project-11th-caadp-platform.

30. Transforming the agricultural sector is thus crucial to tackling the challenges of unemployment and stimulating economic growth to eradicate poverty. Countries need to invest in modernizing agriculture in order to provide young people with employment and entrepreneurial opportunities along its value chain. They need to design policies and strategies that will promote access to land, capital, education and training. Investing in education and vocational training has the potential to increase the rates of youth employment and income. Countries with large rural populations and low levels of industrialization need to focus on creating rural employment, although managing urban growth and bringing about economic diversification remain critical objectives.

31. Structural transformation and industrialization require the corresponding development of African human capital. Both the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 call for a green economy, aiming to leapfrog to clean energy use and transform economies by alleviating their structural vulnerabilities. The green sector being relatively knowledge intensive, its expansion will increase the demand for skilled labour while stimulating structural transformation, productivity change and employment growth

32. Industrialization is critical for sustainable development and labour absorption. The continent's industrial sector, however, faces critical shortages of skilled labour and lacks access to affordable credit. It also has to contend with poor infrastructure and high trade and transport costs. Investment uncertainties also discourage industrial firms from growing. Furthermore, the sector is dominated by micro, small and medium-sized enterprises. There is a strong need to improve the growth prospects of these enterprises through market development training and by strengthening their linkages to large formal enterprises. This will contribute to job creation and poverty eradication efforts. Furthermore, countries need to improve the competitiveness and capability of domestic firms and upgrade skills formation in the labour force. A strong private sector and increased public-private partnerships can boost training and skills upgrading in order to better match skills to labour markets.

V. Progress in education and health care

33. NEPAD and Agenda 2063 emphasize the role of an educated, healthy and productive workforce in driving the continent's transformation. Africa has made considerable progress in the education sector. Countries have made strong political commitments, as seen in the unprecedented public investment in primary education, the design and implementation of national policy frameworks and the mobilization of civil society and the international community to expand access and improve educational outcomes. Fifteen countries have abolished school fees since 2000, allowing more children to attend primary school.[20]

34. African countries continue to expand education at all levels. There is growing recognition that investment in early childhood development better prepares children for successful primary education and beyond. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, around 11 million children were

[20] United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), *Education for All 2000-2015: Achievements and Challenges* (Paris, 2015).

enrolled in pre-primary education in sub-Saharan Africa in 2008, an increase of 4.6 million since 1990.[21] Furthermore, about 20 and 21.5 per cent of young children were enrolled in pre-primary programmes in 2012 and 2014, respectively.[22] Investing in good-quality pre-primary education will improve primary and higher education outcomes.

35. Primary education lays the foundation for building an educated and skilled workforce that can propel countries to prosperity. There has been steady progress in achieving primary completion in Africa, but one third of those who begin the first grade are likely not to reach the last grade of primary education.[23] The completion rate for girls has improved, mainly owing to the implementation of national action to keep them in school. Some 70 per cent of countries recorded an 80 per cent net enrolment rate in primary education in 2015, compared with 31.4 per cent in 2001.[8] The number of children not attending school has been halved and the gender gap narrowed in both the net enrolment rate and the completion rate in primary education. Retention in and quality of education remain challenges, however, and thus require a special focus.

36. Sub-Saharan Africa achieved substantial secondary education participation between 1999 and 2012. In 2012, 49 million pupils were enrolled in secondary education in Africa. Nevertheless, social inequalities in access to secondary school persist. For example, children in rural areas are much less likely to be enrolled than those in urban areas. Countries should strive to expand access to and enhance the quality of secondary education in order to better prepare pupils for higher education and equip them with basic skills for the labour market.

37. There are concerns that technical and vocational training programmes have been accorded low priority by sub-Saharan African countries. They accounted for an average of 6 per cent of total secondary enrolment in 2012. They can, however, contribute to enhancing the continent's global competitiveness, allowing employers to recruit their workforce from a pool of educated young adults. Countries therefore need to promote these programmes in order to ensure that the citizenry has skills that match the labour requirements of a continent committed to an inclusive structural transformation and industrialization agenda. Given the rapidly growing, large labour force and the dominance of the informal sector, there is a strong need to design training and capacity development programmes for young people.

38. The proportion of people with at least secondary education has also risen. Higher education enrolment increased from 2.3 million people in 2000 to 5.2 million in Africa in 2010. Nevertheless, only 6 per cent of young people in sub-Saharan Africa are enrolled in higher education institutions. A one-year increase in the average tertiary education level in sub-Saharan Africa is estimated to yield an increase of up to 12 per cent in GDP, raising the annual GDP growth by

[21] UNESCO, *The Hidden Crisis: Armed Conflict and Education* (Paris, 2011).

[22] UNESCO, *Global Education Monitoring Report 2016. Education for People and Planet: Creating Sustainable Futures for All* (Paris, 2016).

[23] Economic Commission for Africa and others, *MDG Report 2015: Lessons Learned in Implementing the MDGs — Assessing Progress in Africa toward the Millennium Development Goals* (Addis Ababa, Economic Commission for Africa, 2015).

0.39 percentage points.[24] Countries therefore need to invest to improve higher education.

39. Those gains notwithstanding, around 31 million primary school-age children and 24 million adolescents were out of school in sub-Saharan Africa in 2014.[22] Half of the children have never been enrolled or may never enrol, and most of the adolescents were living in conflict-affected areas. Countries should allocate adequate resources to meet the basic learning and skills development needs of those disadvantaged and vulnerable groups. They should design programmes that are tailored to the needs of out-of-school boys and girls in conflict areas. Countries need to remove structural barriers, design policies aimed at improving equity among disadvantaged social groups, increase public investment in early childhood education and improve and strengthen the coordination of policies among the various sectors and skills development programmes for teachers.

40. Africa has continued to make steady progress in improving access to health-care services and health outcomes. Unprecedented declines were registered in child mortality between 1990 and 2015, including in infant mortality. The under-5 mortality rate declined by more than two thirds of the 1990 levels in Ethiopia, Liberia, Malawi, Mozambique, the Niger, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania.[8] The pace of decline, however, has been slower in sub-Saharan Africa than elsewhere and the subregion continues to have the highest child mortality rates in the world. The main causes of death are diarrhoea, pneumonia and malaria. An increase in immunization coverage and a reduction in malaria-related deaths have contributed to the decline in child mortality.

41. Progress has also been made in improving maternal health outcomes, but many women still die during childbirth from preventable causes such as infection, hypertension and haemorrhage. Sub-Saharan Africa accounts for 88 per cent of maternal deaths globally. The proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel has increased, from 45 per cent in 1990 to 71 per cent in 2014, contributing to the reduction in maternal and child mortality. Antenatal care coverage has also improved.

42. Although it increased from 28 per cent in 1990 to 43.6 per cent in 2013, contraceptive prevalence in Africa remains among the lowest in the world. Sub-Saharan Africa had the highest adolescent birth rate in 2012. The birth rate declined by 4.5 per cent between 1990 and 2012. The subregion had a high unmet need for family planning (18 per cent) in 2013.

43. There were accelerated declines in HIV incidence and prevalence between 2001 and 2012. In 2013, the prevalence was 4.4 per cent and the incidence (number of persons newly infected with HIV per year) 0.29 per cent. Both indicators fell more swiftly over the period 2012-2013 than over the period 2001-2012. Africa is at the forefront of expanding access to antiretroviral therapy. The greatest increase occurred in sub-Saharan Africa, where the number of people receiving such therapy was very low — 100,000 — up to 2003, but reached 10.6 million (or 41 per cent of people living with HIV) in 2014.[25] Africa is also making notable progress in

[24] World Bank, *Accelerating Catch-up: Tertiary Education for Growth in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Washington, D.C., 2009).

[25] See www.who.int/gho/hiv/epidemic_response/ART_text/en/.

combating malaria, with six countries — Algeria, Botswana, Cabo Verde, the Comoros, South Africa and Swaziland — likely to rid themselves of the disease by 2020. In the WHO Africa region, malaria mortality rates declined by 66 per cent among all age groups and by 71 per cent among children under 5 years of age. Infection rates have been declining owing to the widespread use of insecticide-treated bednets, regular spraying, rapid diagnostic testing and artemisinin-based therapies.[26] Unfortunately, the continent's steady downward trends in tuberculosis incidence, prevalence and mortality since the early 2000s showed signs of reversal between 2012 and 2013.

VI. Progress in women's empowerment and gender equality

44. Africa has made remarkable progress in promoting the active participation of women in public affairs. The participation of women in the parliaments of Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Rwanda and Seychelles has exceeded 15 per cent. The average representation of women in 1990 was 8 per cent, increasing to 9 per cent by 2000. An average gain of 16 per cent was achieved during the period 2000-2015. Participation stood at 22 per cent in 2015.[8]

45. The participation of girls in secondary education has slowly increased, from 71 girls per 100 boys in the 1990s to 80 per cent in 2000 and 90 per cent in 2013, but Southern African countries have seen higher participation, above the African average, over the years. Tertiary-level female participation remains very low, at 68 girls per 100 boys compared with 86 per 100 in secondary education.

46. Gender inequality and violence against women are major challenges. African women face high levels of discrimination, affecting their socioeconomic rights. Southern Africa had an adult female unemployment rate of 19.1 per cent, compared with an adult male unemployment rate of 14.6 per cent, while the female youth unemployment rate stood at 44.6 per cent and the male rate at 35.4 per cent by 2013. In Northern Africa, adult male unemployment was 7.9 per cent, compared with 14.9 per cent for women; youth unemployment rates were 26 per cent for males and 46.6 per cent for females.[23] These trends partly account for the rising inequality patterns in the region. Social services that directly address women's rights, including housing, health, education, training and childcare, are just as important as and often have an even greater impact than social transfers in reducing poverty and gender inequality. The ratio of women in vulnerable employment is also higher than that of men, especially in Western, Eastern and Middle Africa.

VII. Progress in peace, security and good governance

47. NEPAD stresses that peace and security, improved governance and macroeconomic and corporate governance are critical preconditions for the continent's development. African countries have also committed themselves to pursuing good governance and combating corruption, as highlighted in Agenda 2063.

[26] WHO, *World Malaria Report 2015* (Geneva, 2015).

48. In terms of overall governance, African countries advanced the governance and democracy agenda by supporting the African Peer Review Mechanism, a voluntary self-assessment tool designed to promote more effective governance across four thematic areas: democracy and political governance, corporate governance, economic governance and management, and socioeconomic development. By 2015, 35 African countries had voluntarily acceded to the Mechanism and 18 of them had completed their self-assessments and been peer-reviewed by the Forum, composed of Heads of State and Government. Aiming to position the Mechanism as a monitoring tool for Agenda 2063, its secretariat is aligning its administrative measures and policies with those of the African Union Commission.

49. In terms of peace and security, Africa is making progress in regional coordination towards combating terrorism by setting up multi-country legal mechanisms and initiatives. For example, the Nouakchott process on the enhancement of security cooperation and the operationalization of the African Peace and Security Architecture in the Sahelo-Saharan region was launched in 2013 by 11 countries. In 2014, the Group of Five for the Sahel initiative was established by Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and the Niger to better coordinate the development and security policies of its members. The Economic Community of West African States has adopted several legal instruments to foster judicial cooperation. In addition, African countries have been able to secure resources from international partners to help to address security challenges that undermine peace and security and national development efforts. For example, the European Union has committed €27.7 million to address security concerns in Mali, while the United States of America announced in 2015 that it would give $110 million per year for five years to build the capacity of African militaries to strengthen security and peace as part of the African Peacekeeping Rapid Response Partnership.[8]

50. In terms of political governance, there has been progress in conducting elections. Several African countries have seen their electoral processes become fairer and peaceful. In 2016 and 2017, 26 African countries are expected to hold presidential elections. Nevertheless, political governance remains a challenge in several countries, leading to civil unrest and violent uprisings in some. In some countries, civil society organizations are also playing an increasing role in political governance and democratic transitions.

51. NEPAD underscores that good macroeconomic governance is critical for the continent's structural transformation. It ensures that Governments have the capacity to manage public resources and to deliver high-quality public goods and services. Africa has shown progress in good economic governance through a continued commitment to improving its business environment for private sector development. The continent had the second-largest share of economies implementing at least one ease-of-doing-business regulatory reform. Nevertheless, sub-Saharan Africa remains the subregion with the most difficult business environment. Of 47 African countries surveyed, 35 reported having implemented at least one ease-of-doing-business regulatory reform between June 2013 and June 2014. Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Senegal and Togo were among the 10 countries in the world that most improved their business environment through reforms.[23] Challenges in improving the business environment, however, undermine efforts to

tap into the private sector as an engine of growth and job creation for poverty eradication.

52. Furthermore, corruption and illicit financial flows continue to undermine national development efforts, including poverty eradication. Corruption tends to be particularly high in resource-rich countries with weak institutions and inadequate regulatory environments. People living in poverty, especially in urban areas, are disproportionately affected by corruption and the inefficient delivery of public goods and services. In total, 22 per cent of sub-Saharan Africans having had contact with a public service in the past year admit to having paid a bribe. Throughout the continent, poor people are twice as likely as rich people to have paid a bribe and the odds of having done so are even higher in urban areas.[27]

53. It is estimated that Africa loses more in illicit financial flows than it receives in official development assistance (ODA). Every year, more than $50 billion leaves Africa illicitly. The flows relate principally to commercial activities, tax evasion, criminal activities (money-laundering, drug trafficking, arms trafficking and trafficking in persons), bribery, corruption and abuse of office. They have a negative impact on social development through losses in government tax revenue, Governments' reduced ability to provide social services and the opportunity cost of lost savings and investment in various economic sectors. Although the main sources of illicit financial flows are from Africa, many corrupt practices often involve non-African actors. Accordingly, while African countries should take primary responsibility for curbing the flows, development partners should also play an important role in combating corruption, tax evasion, asset repatriation and money-laundering. At the global level, illicit financial flow issues should be incorporated into United Nations processes and frameworks.[28]

VIII. Mobilizing financial resources for inclusive development

54. In the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, greater importance is placed on domestic sources of finance for inclusive development, marking a shift from a development model centred on ODA. The investment required to finance efforts to attain the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa is estimated to range between $600 billion and $1.2 trillion per year.[29] Raising those resources is dependent on sustained economic growth, improved natural resource management, improved and fair trade between Africa and the rest of the world, the leveraging of financial resources from commodity booms, rising flows of foreign direct investment, improved tax collection, efforts to tackle illicit financial flows, debt cancellation and management, and smarter use of ODA.

55. African countries have shown their resolve to mobilize domestic resources and maximize new financing, such as remittances, to fund their continental development

[27] Coralie Pring, *People and Corruption: Africa Survey 2015 — Global Corruption Barometer* (Berlin, Transparency International, 2015).

[28] According to the High-level Panel on Illicit Financial Flows from Africa. See www.uneca.org/sites/default/files/PublicationFiles/iff_main_report_26feb_en.pdf.

[29] *Economic Development in Africa Report 2016: Debt Dynamics and Development Finance in Africa* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.16.II.D.3).

blueprint. The continent's total tax revenues rose fourfold between 2000 and 2012, from $138 billion to $527 billion.[30] Remittance flows to sub-Saharan Africa reached $35.2 billion in 2015 and are projected to increase to $36.4 billion in 2016 and $37.7 billion in 2017.[31] Those revenues could be even higher with improved tax administration, an expanded tax base and reduced costs of sending remittances to and within Africa, which are the highest in the world. If curbed, illicit financial flows, which exceed $50 billion annually, can further increase domestic resources for development. Debt-relief measures, such as the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative, for which 30 African countries are eligible, could also free up resources for higher spending on social programmes aimed at poverty reduction. Nevertheless, the external debt of several African countries has increased rapidly in recent years, growing by 10.2 per cent per year on average between 2011 and 2013, compared with 7.8 per cent per year between 2006 and 2009.[29]

56. The efforts to scale up domestic resource mobilization notwithstanding, African countries still require predictable and additional support from development partners. In that regard, it is imperative that developed countries fulfil their existing commitments relating to development assistance, in particular to least developed countries. From 2013 to 2014, net total ODA to Africa fell by 5 per cent, from $57 billion to $54 billion, and net bilateral ODA from the 28 countries of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development fell by 3 per cent, from $30 billion to $29 billion.[32]

57. Several programmes and initiatives provide support for investing in sustainable and inclusive agricultural systems in Africa. The Grow Africa partnership, which has gained the commitment of 230 companies, a majority of which are African, has committed itself to investing $10 billion in African agriculture by 2015. From 2013 to 2015, $2.3 billion of that total commitment was provided, reaching 10 million smallholder farmers and creating 88,800 jobs over the three years. New investment commitments in 2016 totalled $500 million.[33] Such investment will help millions of people, especially those living in rural areas, to escape from poverty and hunger. Importantly, the decent jobs that they create have the potential to attract African young people to the sector.

58. Development partners have also supported the continent's efforts. Through the Tokyo International Conference on African Development process, Japan is helping to strengthen sectors that have a high potential to lead to sustainable growth in Africa. In 2013, Japan committed itself to providing Africa with up to $32 billion over the five years ending in 2017 by using private and public means, including ODA of some $14 billion. By 2015, around $21.7 billion had been disbursed, achieving almost 70 per cent of the target. In 2016, Japan announced that it would

[30] African Development Bank, "Financing Africa's development through domestic resource mobilization", 17 July 2015. Available from www.fin4dev.org/2015/07/17/financing-africas-development-through-domestic-resource-mobilization/.

[31] World Bank Group, *Migration and Remittances: Recent Developments and Outlook*, Migration and Development Brief, No. 26 (Washington, D.C., 2016).

[32] See www.oecd.org/dac/stats/documentupload/2%20Africa%20-%20Development%20Aid%20at%20a%20Glance%202016.pdf.

[33] Grow Africa, "$2.3 billion invested by Grow Africa partners between 2013 and 2015 with $500 million invested in 2015", letter of intent. Available from https://community.growafrica.com/groups/23-billion-invested-grow-africa-partners-between-2013-and-2015-500-million-invested-2015.

invest some $30 billion for the future of Africa from 2016 to 2018. Investment will be made through public-private partnership initiatives centred on developing high-quality infrastructure, building resilient health systems, ensuring food and nutrition security and laying the foundations for peace and stability. The measures will also include human resource development for 10 million people.[34]

59. African countries are also benefiting from South-South cooperation. In 2015, India approved $10.6 billion in concessional credit for the coming five years and grant assistance of $600 million. The grant includes $100 million for development and $10 million for health. It also includes 50,000 scholarships in India and will support educational institutions throughout Africa.[35] In 2015, China upgraded its relationship with Africa to a comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership, boosting its funding support to $60 billion, including $5 billion of free aid and interest-free loans and $35 billion of preferential loans and export credit on more favourable terms.[36] From 2013 to 2015, Brazil funded technical cooperation projects in 42 African countries, with agriculture accounting for 19 per cent of the total fund of $36 million. Brazil also committed $2.4 million to support Purchase from Africans for Africa, a food acquisition project, in Ethiopia, Malawi, Mozambique, the Niger and Senegal.

60. Given that the price tag for successfully implementing the continent's own development priorities is expected to be extremely high, international public finance for development cooperation remains critical. These costs will increase even further as African countries begin to realize the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063.

IX. Conclusion and recommendations

61. To further promote inclusive social and economic progress in Africa, the Commission may wish to consider the following recommendations:

(a) **To achieve inclusive social and economic development, African countries should work to develop a coherent strategy for the effective and coordinated implementation of the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the development of integrated national policy frameworks and implementation strategies that leave no one behind, in particular women, young people, older persons and persons with disabilities;**

(b) **African countries need to increase social investment in education and skills development, with particular attention to young people, in order to tackle poverty and inequality through full employment and decent work. This will**

[34] Japan, Cabinet Office, "Focusing on public-private investments", Japan in Africa, vol. 4 (September 2016). Available from www.japan.go.jp/ticad/Japan_in_Africa4.html.

[35] India-Africa Forum Summit, *India-Africa Forum Summit III: New Hopes, New Horizons*, New Delhi, October 2015. Available from http://mea.gov.in/india-africa-forum-summit-2015/index.html#.

[36] Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, "Xi announces 10 major China-Africa cooperation plans for coming 3 years", 8 December 2015. Available from www.focac.org/eng/ltda/dwjbzjjhys_1/t1322068.htm.

also raise the productive capacity of their populations to capitalize on the opportunities provided by the demographic change;

(c) To eradicate poverty, overcome hunger and food insecurity and ensure inclusive and sustainable social and economic development, African countries should continue to accord priority to investment in agriculture and to promote structural transformation;

(d) African countries should continue to accord priority to gender equality, women's empowerment and women's participation in political and productive activities;

(e) For the realization of social and people-centred development, African countries need to strengthen and develop institutions for transparent and accountable governance and administration in all sectors of society and allow effective participation by civil society, including non-governmental and community-based organizations, and the private sector;

(f) The international community, including the entities of the United Nations system, should continue to promote, support and facilitate the implementation of the African development priorities, as set out in Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda.

United Nations E/CN.5/2017/3

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
23 November 2016

Original: English

Commission for Social Development
Fifty-fifth session
1-10 February 2017
Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly

Strategies for eradicating poverty to achieve sustainable development for all

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to resolution 2016/6 of the Economic and Social Council. It provides a review of progress made to date to eradicate poverty and various strategies that have been implemented by countries. The report also highlights challenges encountered and includes recommendations to accelerate the eradication of poverty in all its forms, including extreme poverty.

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 2016/6, the Economic and Social Council decided that the priority theme for the 2017-2018 review and policy cycle of the Commission for Social Development would be "Strategies for eradicating poverty to achieve sustainable development for all". The present report is therefore prepared for the review year in the two-year work cycle of the Commission. In the resolution, the Council also affirmed that the Commission would contribute to the follow-up of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, within its existing mandate, by supporting the thematic reviews of the high-level political forum on sustainable development on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. In that regard, the Commission for Social Development is expected to provide substantive inputs to the 2017 high-level political forum that will be held under the theme "Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world". In the resolution, the Council further reaffirmed that the Commission would continue to review issues related to the follow-up and implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development,[1] and advise the Council thereon.

II. Poverty eradication in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

2. The 2030 Agenda recognizes that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. By placing poverty eradication at the centre of the 2030 Agenda and pledging to "leave no one behind" and to "reach the furthest behind first", the Agenda sets a powerful vision towards creating peaceful and inclusive societies based on universal respect for human rights and human dignity, the rule of law, justice, equality and non-discrimination. It ensures that all people, regardless of their background, can fulfil their potential in life, and lead decent, dignified and rewarding lives in a healthy environment.

3. The 2030 Agenda aims to address poverty in a more coherent, holistic and systematic manner. It seeks to find solutions to increasingly more complex and intertwined global challenges. Building on the lessons learned from the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, the 2030 Agenda underscores the need for a coherent and coordinated approach to policymaking, implementation, monitoring and evaluation across all sectors. This approach enhances the ability of policymakers to formulate coherent and integrated strategies to achieve sustainable development by identifying and streamlining competing priorities, trade-offs or contradictory measures, and creating synergies among social, economic and environmental dimensions. The importance of building multi-stakeholder partnerships is also highlighted, allowing all segments of society to effectively contribute to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

[1] *Report of the World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen, 6-12 March 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.8), chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II.

4. The 2030 Agenda aims to end poverty in all its forms everywhere, through goals and targets on various dimensions of poverty. Furthermore, poverty eradication, as the overarching goal, is mainstreamed into all other Goals and targets. Indicators identified under each Goal and target, in particular, multipurpose indicators, could effectively address interlinkages between Goal 1 and other Goals. Sustainable Development Goal indicators are disaggregated, where relevant, by income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability and geographic locations, or other characteristics, which enables the identification of the location and characteristics of people living in poverty to address their specific needs.

5. New policy approaches and strategies are required to tackle poverty in all its forms, including extreme poverty. Maintaining the policy status quo will not get the job done, particularly the principle of ensuring that no one is left behind. Given the diversity among developed, developing and the least developed countries, strategies for eradicating poverty to achieve sustainable development for all cannot be of the one-size-fits all variety. Rather, strategies should reflect varying national contexts, priorities, capacities and fiscal constraints. Social, economic and environmental policies and strategies and the global partnerships worked together to bring about significant reductions in levels of extreme poverty and hunger and other dimensions of poverty. Evidence in this regard underscores the importance of political will, institutions, governance and the combination of mutually reinforcing policies and strategies. Policy coherence and integration and the sequencing of policy measures also contributed to progress towards eradicating poverty in all its forms. Successful strategies identified sources of growth and specific obstacles to pro-poor growth, stimulated sustained and inclusive growth, promoted the dynamic structural transformation of economies, invested in human capital formation, ensured food and nutrition security, created decent jobs and provided social protection. They also considered social development vital for long-term economic growth and prosperity, not a consequence of this growth.

6. Furthermore, eradicating poverty in all its forms should be considered within the context of national and international strategies for social, economic and environmental progress. In this framework, international development cooperation can play a more effective and sustainable role if it is integrated as part of the national development strategy assumed by the country in question. Therefore, national poverty eradication strategies can have more impact if there is integration and coherence with international support. This will require avoiding prescribing a universal set of actions to all countries. Owing to varying national contexts, each country and the regions and localities within a given country need policies and strategies that are tailored to their unique needs, priorities and historical circumstances.

7. The experience of various countries also shows that strong political, institutional and governmental capabilities are critical to eradicating poverty as well as combating issues such as illicit financial flows, corruption and tax evasion. Inclusive institutions permit a more direct participation of the citizenry in decisions and collective actions that affect their daily lives, such as accessing quality education and health-care services. In some countries, national development efforts, including poverty eradication, were undergirded by the implementation of reforms that encouraged decentralization, regionalization, flexibility and administrative

efficiency. Other countries placed strong emphasis on the role of the developmental State in directing national development efforts and regulating the market. Similarly, other countries have permitted markets to play a more prominent role in providing public goods and services such as quality education and health-care services. Some countries have also sought to strengthen the role of civil society, non-governmental organizations and the private sector in national development efforts. Hence, consensus-building among power groups, trade-offs, coalition-building, political context and history all influence national ownership and the impact of strategies for eradicating poverty to achieve sustainable development for all.

8. However, while countries should promote poverty eradication for all members of society, priority needs to be accorded to those furthest left behind, in particular women, persons with disabilities, youth, older persons and indigenous peoples. Similarly, the efforts of the international community should focus on countries further behind, in particular sub-Saharan Africa, the least developed countries and the small island developing States. Many of these countries have limited resources and productive capacity to fight poverty.

III. Progress in eradicating poverty

9. The world has made tremendous progress against poverty. In 2013, the most recent year for which data are available, 767 million people (10.7 per cent of the global population) lived below $1.90 per person per day, 1.1 billion fewer people than in 1990.[2] Poverty declined by 1.7 percentage points from the global poverty headcount in 2012. The continued decline in the number of the extreme poor is accounted for largely by progress in East Asia and Pacific, where the headcount declined to 3.5 per cent in 2013, from 7.1 per in 2012 and South Asia (from 17.5 to 15.1 per cent). In sub-Saharan Africa, the poverty rate declined to 41.0 per cent in 2013, from 42.6 per cent in 2012, representing a decline of only 4 million people. In Europe and Central Asia, the poverty headcount declined to 2.2 per cent in 2013, from 2.4 per cent in 2012. In Latin America and the Caribbean, the rate declined to 5.4 per cent from 5.6 per cent. Poverty remains stubbornly high in the least developed countries, where progress is much slower and where the challenges are greatest. In the Middle East and North Africa region, poverty has increased in recent years, particularly in countries affected by armed conflict and instability.[3]

10. When it is defined in relative terms on the basis of incomes representing less than 60 per cent of the median income, poverty increased in developed countries, especially in Europe. In 2012, more than 300 million people in developed countries were estimated to be living in poverty. However, the percentage of Americans living in poverty declined for the first time since 2006. In 2013, an estimated 14.5 per cent of the population lived below the poverty line, down from 15 per cent in 2012. Trends in child poverty since 2008 also remain a concern, with relative child poverty having increased in 23 member countries of the Organization for Economic

[2] World Bank, *Poverty and Shared Prosperity 2016: Taking on Inequality* (Washington, D.C., 2016).

[3] Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia and United Nations Environment Programme, "Arab sustainable development report, first edition" (E/ESCWA/SDPD/2015/3).

Cooperation and Development (OECD) since 2008. An estimated 77 million children lived in poverty in the 41 most affluent countries in 2014.

11. While there has been some progress in reducing undernourishment, with the number of people suffering from undernourishment falling from over 1 billion people in the period 1990-1992 to 780 million people in the period 2014-2016, the goal of eradicating hunger has not been achieved, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.[4] Furthermore, nearly 2 billion people suffered from micronutrient deficiencies, 156 million children under the age of five were stunted, 42 million children were overweight and 50 million children of the same age were wasted,[5] in 2015.[6]

IV. Strategies for eradicating poverty

A. Eradication of poverty through the promotion of inclusive and equitable economic growth

1. Integrated social and economic policy for inclusive and pro-poor growth

12. Historically, no country, developed or developing, has rapidly and sustainably reduced extreme poverty without economic growth. Growth has been the main source of progress against absolute poverty because it provides the resources for increased public investment in education, health, infrastructure, social protection and other critical investments. Cross-country evidence from the 1980s and 1990s showed that broad-based growth accounted for at least two thirds of reductions in extreme poverty.[7] The impact of growth on poverty was more pronounced when accompanied by strategies that ensured that the benefits of growth were widely shared.

13. However, economic growth is not sufficient to guarantee sustained poverty reduction. Poverty reduction strongly depends on the patterns and sources of economic growth and the manner in which the benefits of that growth are distributed. When initial inequality is high, the impact of growth on poverty reduction tends to be weaker. Growth tends to have a bigger impact on poverty when there is a shift towards greater equality. The benefits from growth must be broadly shared, including improving the incomes and welfare of those left furthest behind.[8] Such a strategy was very effective in East Asia, where the sharing of the benefits of growth included boosting public expenditures to expand access to

[4] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development and World Food Programme, *The State of Food Insecurity in the World: Meeting the 2015 international hunger targets: taking stock of uneven progress* (Rome, FAO, 2015).

[5] Wasting refers to a child who is too thin for his or her height.

[6] United Nations Children's Fund, World Health Organization (WHO) and World Bank, "Levels and trends in child malnutrition: joint child malnutrition estimates: key findings of the 2015 edition", 2016.

[7] Aart Kraay, "When is growth pro-poor? Evidence from a panel of countries," *Journal of Development Economics*, vol. 80, Issue 1 (June 2006), pp. 198-227.

[8] Jonathan D. Ostry and others, "Redistribution, inequality and growth", International Monetary Fund Staff Discussion Note 14/02, 2014.

universal primary education and free basic health care and infrastructure as well as enacting land reforms.

14. Maintaining the higher growth rate for the developing world as a whole seen since 2000 without a rise in overall inequality could potentially lift about 1 billion people out of extreme absolute poverty by 2030.[9] To achieve this success will require successful actions to create the conditions for sustained and rapid pro-poor growth that will generate more income-earning opportunities so that people living in poverty can engage in productive and well-paid work. More importantly, growth should not bypass the poor and should not be accompanied by rising inequality. Pro-poor strategies and policies should also be accompanied by effective and inclusive public institutions and the provision of quality services that are inclusive of all segments of society, including people living in poverty, disadvantaged and marginalized groups, and rural and remote areas.

15. Successful actions include implementing poverty-reducing economic reforms that ensure that markets work better for people living in poverty. They also entail ensuring that people living in poverty are able to participate and benefit fully from growth. Furthermore, growth has to be fair in creating better opportunities for, and unleashing the productive potential of, women, older persons, youth, persons with disabilities, indigenous groups and other groups left furthest behind.[10] Success in these areas will require that people living in poverty have access to quality education and health-care services, labour market opportunities, productive assets and financial resources. Furthermore, success also depends on the absence of major financial, economic and agro-climatic crises.

16. To achieve more pro-poor growth, greater efforts are also required to remove biases against people living in poverty in public spending in education and health, taxation, trade and regulation; to promote agriculture and rural development; to invest in local public goods and services in poor, rural and remote areas; to remove restrictions on migration; and to increase labour absorption in urban economies, particularly in small and medium-sized towns and cities. The substantial decline in rural poverty in India has been attributed to public expenditure in rural infrastructure, agricultural research, education and health.[11]

17. For growth to be inclusive and pro-poor, it must also create employment, which serves as the link between growth and poverty reduction. Creating decent employment opportunities that meet the demand for a growing labour force plays a major role in this context, as are efforts to increase the real incomes of people living in poverty, such as reducing income inequality and providing social protection. The countries that have followed employment-intensive strategies alongside high rates of growth are the countries that have succeeded in reducing poverty significantly. Strategies that focus on boosting decent employment in sectors where people living in poverty are concentrated tend to be more effective at reducing poverty compared with capital intensive sectors. The incomes of those at the bottom of the income

[9] Martin Ravallion, "How long will it take to lift one billion people out of poverty?", *World Bank Research Observer*, vol. 28, Issue 2 (August 2013), pp. 139-158.

[10] International Monetary Fund, OECD, United Nations and World Bank, "A Better World for All: Progress towards the international development goals", 2000.

[11] Shenggen Fan and others, "Government spending, growth and poverty in rural India", *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*, vol. 82, No. 4 (November 2000), pp. 1038-1051.

distribution grow faster when growth occurs in sectors such as agriculture and labour-intensive manufacturing.

18. In the 1970s and 1980s, Indonesia experienced patterns of growth that led to high rates of employment creation and poverty reduction. The proportion of people living on less than $1.90 a day declined from 83.4 per cent in 1981 to 9.8 per cent in 2013. Similarly, high rates of economic growth in Uganda and Viet Nam in the 1990s contributed to significant reductions in poverty. Over the same period, extreme poverty declined in Viet Nam to 3.2 per cent from 82 per cent, and to 34.6 per cent from 87 per cent in Uganda. These countries pursued pro-poor growth strategies by supporting smallholder agriculture and raising the productivity and real wages of agricultural labourers. Uganda also experienced a massive growth of household enterprises that had a positive impact on household incomes.[12] Brazil has also reduced poverty by maintaining high rates of economic growth and ensuring that State action contributed to improving the lives of people living in poverty. During the period from 2001 to 2006, the poorest 10 per cent of the Brazilian population experienced a 57 per cent growth in real income compared with a cumulative 7 per cent for the richest 10 per cent of the population. State action included scaling up the provision of conditional cash transfers to reduce poverty and inequality and boost human resources development.[13] Similar strategies were also adopted across the region, contributing to reductions in poverty and inequality.

2. Investing in agriculture and rural development for poverty eradication

19. Agriculture and rural economic activities are major sources of employment in developing countries. Extreme poverty and hunger in developing countries are largely rural phenomena and agriculture is at the heart of the livelihoods of the majority of people living in rural areas. Thus, investment in agriculture and rural development are critical to success in eradicating poverty in these countries. In reviewing the experience of African countries in the 1990s, the World Bank found that the countries that focused on boosting agricultural productivity, in particular that of smallholder farmers, as well as improving the non-farm rural economy, were able to post some of the fastest reductions in poverty.[14] Therefore, to speed up poverty eradication efforts as well as improve food security and nutrition, there is a need for strategies that better target the areas where poor people live and the activities on which they draw their sustenance. Effective agricultural strategies also include sectoral and macroeconomic reforms that address the distorted allocation of domestic and official development assistance (ODA) away from the agricultural sector. The neglect of agriculture that occurred during the structural adjustment of the 1980s and early 1990s, when international financial institutions reduced their involvement in or withdrew from the financing of agriculture and rural development, has been cited as a major cause of the persistence of poverty in

[12] Louise Fox and Obert Pimhidzai, "Is informality welfare-enhancing structural transformation? Evidence from Uganda", Policy Research Working Paper 5866 (Washington, D.C., World Bank, 2011).

[13] Thomas Trebat, "Is Brazil starting to grow faster and more equitably, and, if so, who should get the credit?", Latin America EconoMonitor, 5 October 2007, available from www.economonitor.com/blog/2007/10/.

[14] World Bank, *Pro-poor growth in the 1990s: lessons and insights from 14 countries* (Washington, D.C., 2005).

developing countries.[15] The distorted allocation of resources resulted in significant reductions in the public role in agriculture, in particular the provision of credit, subsidies, extension and research.

20. In Brazil, rural credit loans contracted to $6 billion in 1990 from about $25 billion in 1980. In Mexico, agricultural subsidies declined from 22 per cent of agricultural gross domestic product in the early 1980s to less than a quarter of that level at the end of the decade.[16] Across the developing world, similar cuts undermined agricultural production, particularly among smallholder farmers. Countries that sought to reverse such trends have been able to boost the contribution of agriculture to growth and poverty eradication. Enhancing financial inclusion and increased public investment in agriculture and the rural economy have been critical.

21. The experience of developing countries shows that access to land, in particular productive and irrigated land, and strengthening property rights are key instruments to raising farm and off-farm incomes. A further boost in agricultural incomes also occurs when farmers benefit from extension services that promote the efficient use of land and improved access to seeds, fertilizer, credit, irrigation systems and roads. Despite the importance of land and agrarian reforms in eradicating poverty and broadening options for off-farm income-generating activities, access to land remains unresolved in many countries, particularly in countries that inherited highly unequal patterns of land ownership. The issue of access to land and poverty eradication has also received increased attention in the recent past as a result of the surge in acquisitions of vast tracts of fertile land in developing countries by foreign Governments and companies eager to secure affordable food resources in highly volatile commodity markets. Concerns have emerged over displacing rural populations from their ancestral lands and curtailing their access to water, grazing lands, forestry and fisheries as a result of these purchases.

22. The experience of some Latin America and the Caribbean countries shows that placing family farming on the political agenda and establishing bodies within the State structures that are dedicated to family farming helps to boost the productivity of these farms. These bodies provide technical assistance, assist farmers to integrate into markets and provide inputs and finance. One of the most innovative approaches in this area has been the inclusion of family agriculture in the inter-sector policy frameworks. This has resulted in the preferential inclusion of family farming products in public procurement programmes, which are then used to improve the quality of school meals.

23. Given the limitations of subsistence agriculture and agricultural wage employment in developing countries, the rural non-farm economy has emerged as an effective exit path out of poverty. The potential routes out of poverty for most rural households therefore include some combination of market-oriented smallholder farming, non-farm activities in agribusiness, manufacturing and services, and rural-urban migration. In the least developed countries, total household income from non-agricultural activities typically exceeds agricultural wage income by a factor of

[15] *Rethinking Poverty: Report on the World Social Situation 2010* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.09/IV.10)

[16] Max Spoor, "Two decades of adjustment and agricultural development in Latin America and the Caribbean", 2000, Serie Reformas Economicas 56

three to four.[17] To enhance the contribution of rural non-farm activities to employment creation and increasing incomes requires improvements in rural infrastructure, including transport, energy, communications and marketing and storage facilities.

24. The experience of China provides strong evidence of the positive role that the rural non-farm economy can play in generating employment, raising incomes and reducing poverty. The Government actively supported township and village enterprises in order to achieve agricultural modernization, absorb surplus labour from agriculture and reduce poverty. Between 1980 and 1995, 100 million new rural jobs were created.[18]

25. Government-run public work schemes that provide guaranteed employment to the poor or agricultural labourers have also gained in popularity in many countries. This includes the world's largest public works programme, the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act of 2005 in India. Since 2008, the programme has provided employment to more than 50 million rural households, and, according to data from the periods 2004-2005 and 2011-2012, it reduced poverty by 32 per cent and prevented 14 million people from falling into poverty.[19] The programme is also associated with improved nutrition, a lower incidence of child labour and better education outcomes for children. In some countries, agricultural strategies for poverty eradication have moved beyond boosting production and investing in roads and irrigation networks to improving market access and distribution. In 2008, Ethiopia launched a commodity exchange to serve smallholder farmers and small traders.[20] Within four years of the opening of the exchange, farmers' share of crop export prices doubled to 70 per cent, improving the incomes of farmers. Furthermore, 12 per cent of the members of the exchange were farmer cooperatives representing 2.4 million smallholder farmers. The exchange has also empowered smallholder farmers by ensuring that they can obtain current price information through the exchange.

3. Eradicating poverty through structural transformation and infrastructure investments

26. Structural transformation through industrialization remains the most effective strategy to eradicate mass absolute poverty and ensure continuous improvement in standards of living. The experience of today's rich countries as well as major emerging economies shows that promoting and achieving the structural transformation of economies through industrialization, technological innovation and industrial upgrading is the most effective condition for social and economic progress. The process of lifting workers from lower productivity jobs in the primary sector to better paying jobs in higher productivity secondary and tertiary sectors is

[17] *The Least Developed Countries Report 2015: Transforming Rural Economies* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.15.II.D.7).

[18] World Bank, *World Development Report 1996: From Plan to Market* (Washington, D.C., 1996).

[19] Sonalde Desai and others, *Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act: A Catalyst for Rural Transformation*, (New Delhi, National Council of Applied Economic Research, 2015).

[20] Eleni Gabre-Madhin, "A market for Abdu: creating a commodity exchange in Ethiopia" (Washington, D.C., International Food Policy Research Institute, 2012).

the primary channel through which structural transformation, or the increase in aggregate productivity, translates into poverty reduction. Therefore, achieving structural transformation usually follows significant improvements in agriculture and investments in human capital formation.

27. Lessons from history and from the recent past experience of several countries show that it is possible to transform the structure of the economy for sustained growth and poverty reduction. Factors such as geographic location, size and natural resource constraints are not sufficient to curtail a country's ability to transform the structure of its economy. Despite having few natural resources, Mauritius and Singapore have demonstrated that is possible to industrialize and raise living standards by harnessing existing comparative advantages and tapping into the potential of latecomer advantages.[21] Countries should therefore actively identify and facilitate the development of new industries consistent with their comparative advantages, such as having abundant natural resources or cheap labour that can attract labour-intensive light industries. Countries can also leverage the presence of skilled labour to attract higher-value-added manufacturing industries. Latecomer advantages entail emulating the experience of successful lead countries. Brazil, China and India represent emerging economies that implemented this strategy successfully, allowing them to generate rapid growth, job creation and significant reductions in poverty. For resource-rich countries, structural transformation strategies have often entailed pursuing commodity-based industrialization. For some developing countries, well-conceived agro-industrial development has contributed to reducing poverty.

28. The process of changing the structure of an economy can only significantly contribute to poverty eradication if that process stimulates rapid economic growth, is inclusive, generates employment and ensures that workers get a fair share of the gains brought about by increases in productivity. Furthermore, there is a need to promote industrial and social policies that are in line with the needs for an economy's transformation, in particular policies that foster diversification, create decent employment and reduce poverty and inequality. For example, policies and strategies in which the educational system is combined with on-the-job training and apprenticeships could produce the skills required for transformation. Encouraging entrepreneurship and innovation is also important. It should be noted that for structural transformation to create adequate employment and contribute to poverty reduction, it has to go hand in hand with a number of supportive measures that include the adoption of labour-intensive production processes and strengthening backward and forward linkages between activities and sectors. Some of the increase in productivity associated with transformation has to be passed on to workers to create additional demand and hence employment. Furthermore, countries need to address constraints to employment creation, such as infrastructure bottlenecks and inadequate workforce skills. Promoting rural development should also be an integral part of the structural transformation agenda.

[21] Justin Y. Lin, "From flying geese to leading dragons: new opportunities and strategies for structural transformation in developing countries", World Institute for Development Economics Research Lecture, Maputo, 4 May 2011.

B. Coherent social policy framework to ensure that no one is left behind

29. Effective policies and strategies for eradicating poverty have to be augmented by actions that strengthen people's resilience to cope with potential setbacks. When faced with health risks or economic, social and environmental shocks, people with limited savings or assets are unable to cope and are often pushed into poverty. Research has shown that 20-60 per cent of people who escape poverty tend to fall back into poverty within 4 to 10 years. This suggests that different strategies should be applied to tackle extreme poverty, prevent impoverishment and sustain those who escape from extreme poverty.

30. As risks affect people across the life cycle, combating poverty requires implementing universal pro-poor and inclusive policies, while addressing the specific needs of the extreme poor. This includes identifying where the poor live and their characteristics. This requires disaggregated, accurate and reliable data. Furthermore, monitoring the progress of poverty eradication should focus on all forms and dimensions of poverty, including, income, hunger, poor basic services, the lack of social protection and decent work deficits.

1. Investing in people and promoting empowerment

31. Education has been proven effective for poverty eradication, in particular working poverty, which affects almost 90 per cent of workers in low-income countries. It also improves health and nutrition, empowers women and reduces fertility rates. Furthermore, education provides skills that are required for green innovation and for boosting agricultural productivity. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) estimates that increasing tertiary education in 10 recent member States of the European Union would reduce the number of people at risk of poverty by 3.7 million. Despite impressive progress over the past decades, a large number of children and adolescents remain excluded from education. Globally, 263 million children, adolescents and youth were out of school in 2014.[22] An estimated 142 million youth (15-17 years old) were out of school, and 21 per cent of them live in sub-Saharan Africa. In 2014, almost 21.5 million children of primary age, or 35 per cent of out-of-school children, live in conflict-affected countries. Significant disparities in access to education also persist. Children from the poorest 20 per cent of households are more than four times as likely to be out of school as their richest peers. Furthermore, gender disparities still exist, particularly in secondary education.

32. Many children attending school do not necessarily attain expected learning outcomes. Despite record high enrolment rates, at least 250 million children lack the most basic reading, writing and numeracy skills. In 2013, about 757 million adults (aged 15 and older) were unable to read and write, of whom two thirds were women. Education programmes that focus on basic skills and direct instruction towards children's actual learning levels can help to address such challenges.

[22] UNESCO, *Global Education Monitoring Report 2016, Education for people and planet: Creating sustainable futures for all* (Paris, 2016).

33. A broad strategy is also required to invest in social infrastructure, human resources development and educational systems to broaden access to opportunity. Sufficient resources need to be secured to address the specific needs of marginalized or disadvantaged populations, including through offering early childhood education and care, mother-tongue education and lifelong learning opportunities. Such investments are a cost-effective strategy for promoting inclusive economic growth and ensuring greater returns in education and health.

34. UNESCO estimates approximately 69 million primary and secondary school teachers need to be recruited between 2016 and 2030 to achieve educational goals. There is also a pressing need for well-trained and well-compensated teachers, especially in sub-Saharan Africa and the least developed countries.

35. In addition to improving schooling outcomes, investing in health also has a great impact on poverty reduction through short- and long-term economic gains from improved health at the household level. For example, HIV antiretroviral therapy significantly increases labour force participation and increases the working hours of people living with HIV/AIDS. It also has large spillover effects for non-infected family members. Furthermore, malaria treatment has a positive impact on cognition and educational attainment for young children and on the enhanced productivity of workers. The availability of clean drinking water and sanitation also significantly improves the health and the quality of life of people living in poverty. For example, a point-of-use chlorine dispenser that can be directly installed at community water sources has shown to be effective in areas without clean water or piped connections to households.

36. Despite progress in reducing the global maternal mortality ratio by 44 per cent between 1990 and 2015, the current ratio of 216 deaths per 100,000 live births is unacceptably high. Similarly, despite the reduction of the global under-5 mortality rate by more than half from 1990 to 2015, an estimated 5.9 million children under age 5 died in 2015, mostly from preventable causes. In many low-income countries, about half of all deaths are caused by communicable diseases, while more than two thirds of deaths in middle- and high-income countries are related to non-communicable diseases.

37. Globally, 400 million people lack access to one or more essential health services.[23] Every year, around 100 million people are pushed into poverty, and 150 million people suffer financial catastrophe, owing to out-of-pocket payments for health services. Many more people are too poor to see doctors. Universal health coverage is necessary to ensure that all people everywhere can access quality health services without being forced into poverty. In that regard, more than 30 middle-income countries are implementing programmes towards universal coverage and many more are considering launching similar programmes. The success of such programmes will depend on adequate health financing and financial risk protection. Hence, it is notable that the World Bank has committed to contributing $15 billion in the next five years to improving access to universal health care. Furthermore, the World Bank and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria have

[23] WHO and World Bank, *Tracking Universal Health Coverage: First global monitoring report* (2015).

committed to invest $24 billion in Africa over the next three to five years to support health reforms.

38. Inadequate water supply or sanitation remains a leading cause of poor health and death, poor learning outcomes and low productivity. While 6.6 billion people, or 91 per cent, of the global population had access to an improved drinking water source, an estimated 663 million people were still using unimproved sources or surface water in 2015. An estimated 1.8 billion people were also exposed to unsafe drinking water in 2012, a major contributor to diarrheal disease. WHO estimates that safe drinking water could prevent 1.4 million child deaths from diarrhoea and 860,000 deaths from malnutrition. In 2015, about 2.4 billion people lacked access to improved sanitation, with 946 million people still practicing open defecation. More than 80 per cent of wastewater resulting from human activities is discharged into rivers or sea without any removal of pollution. Tackling these challenges will require sustained infrastructure investments, and closing the vast disparities between rural and urban areas.

39. A fundamental shift is needed to value clean water, which is becoming increasingly scarce, as a result of changing climate patterns, overuse or the unsustainable use of water resources, pollution, and rapid urbanization. In addition, an enabling environment should be created to support innovative financing mechanisms, partnerships for facilitating technological transfers, international cooperation, institutional reform and capacity-building. Despite recent increases in aid flow to water and sanitation projects ($7.6 billion in 2010-2011), funding remains insufficient against existing demands, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa and the least developed countries.

2. Combating inequality

40. High levels of inequality pose a significant challenge to poverty eradication and sustainable development. The 2030 Agenda pledges to reduce inequality and leave no one behind so that all people everywhere enjoy equal opportunities to fulfil their full potential in life. With more evidence available on the magnitude and impact of inequalities, the need for effective policy interventions, including more equitable redistribution strategies, is widely recognized among developed and developing countries alike. Lower inequality is strongly associated with faster and more durable growth.[24]

41. The average income inequality within countries increased in the 1990s, but has been falling in recent years.[25] While Latin America and the Caribbean remains the region with the highest levels of inequality, it has successfully reduced income inequality in the past 10 to 15 years, contributing to reductions in global income inequality and poverty. However, the decline in global inequality in recent years is associated mainly with the rise of income in emerging countries. Furthermore, income inequality within some countries remains high, and has also increased in other countries. Inequality in wealth between the richest and the poorest has also

[24] Ostry and others, see footnote 8 above.

[25] Christoph Lakner and others, "Inequality in the typical country in the last 25 years — a strong increase followed by a recent decline", World Bank blogs, 17 October 2016, available from PovcalNet.

reached new extremes. According to the publication by Capgemini and RBC Wealth Management, *World Wealth Report 2015*, the wealth of global high net worth individual expanded fourfold during the past 20 years and reached $58.7 trillion in 2015, and is projected to surpass $100 trillion by 2025. Such a high concentration of wealth creates social and political tensions and is a source of economic inefficiency.

42. Other dimensions of inequality, such as the unequal distribution of land ownership, disparities in opportunities, access and outcomes of education and health have a significant impact on poverty reduction. In many countries, significant disparities persist in life expectancy at birth, child morbidity and mortality, and school attendance and completion.[26] Similarly, environmental hazards, including climate-related events, have differential impacts on poor and vulnerable groups and communities.

3. Poverty eradication through decent employment

43. The centrality of employment and decent jobs for poverty eradication is well recognized. Jobs provide income security and access to social protection. However, merely having a job does not necessarily guarantee an escape from poverty. The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that 327 million employed people were living in extreme poverty (below $1.90 a day) and 967 million in moderate or near poverty in 2015. In emerging and developing countries, almost one third of those living in extreme and moderate poverty have a job. However, these are low-skilled occupations and sometimes, unpaid jobs, with inadequate and unsafe working conditions and lacking social protection. Women face a higher risk of being in vulnerable employment than men. Even in developed countries, more than 80 per cent of the working poor are in wage and salaried employment, but with high levels of precariousness.

44. The number of workers in vulnerable employment is projected to grow by some 25 million over the next three years in emerging countries. In South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, more than 70 per cent of workers are in vulnerable employment. In sub-Saharan Africa, an estimated 9 out of 10 workers are in vulnerable employment. These vulnerable workers often work in family farms, microenterprises and household businesses.

45. As a majority of poor workers are trapped in low-skilled, low-income and low productivity jobs, enhancing their skills levels, through providing vocational skills training and upgrading, is key to increasing their productivity and labour market participation. At the same time, upgrading and improving the quality of vulnerable work is necessary, including through the formal recognition of and policy development for the informal sector, and progressive extension of social insurance coverage to the informal economy. For example, in China in 2008, the implementation of legislation on labour contractors dramatically increased the coverage under written contracts. In South Africa, legislation on the minimum wage also improved the wages of domestic workers, while in the Philippines, the integration of waste scavengers into the recycling chain provided reliable wages.

[26] *Inequality Matters: Report on the World Social Situation 2013* (United Nations, publication, Sales No. 13.IV.2).

46. As a majority of the working poor live in rural areas and nearly two thirds of the working extreme poor are employed in agriculture and the informal economy, expanding decent job opportunities in rural agriculture and non-farm rural employment and reducing informality are therefore effective strategies for reducing poverty. This will require a progressive shift of the economy towards higher productivity sectors and the creation of decent job opportunities in new sectors; facilitating the transition of microenterprises, small and medium-sized enterprises from informal to formal employment; improving access to market opportunities; promoting financial inclusion; and closing digital gaps. Furthermore, creating jobs in green sectors, such as forest conservation and restoration, sustainable agriculture, water treatment and renewable energy in rural areas can increase incomes, reduce poverty and also redress the depletion of natural resources and environmental degradation.

47. Vulnerable workers, especially those from disadvantaged social groups, often face difficulties in exercising their rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining, which are essential to ensuring decent wages and sustainable livelihoods. Institutional capacities, including effective labour administrations and inspections, need to be strengthened at all levels to ensure adherence to international labour standards and the enforcement of the rule of law and regulations. For example, in Indonesia, legal reform and the ratification of the ILO Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize Convention, 1948 (No. 87) increased the number of trade unions from 1 in 1997 to 87 in 2006. The reform of agricultural labour legislation in Brazil recognized farm labourers, and the constitutional reform of 1988 granted equal rights to urban and rural workers, which guaranteed protection against unfair dismissal, minimum wage, maximum working hours, annual paid leave, social security, safe working conditions and collective bargaining rights.

48. Inclusive business initiatives and public-private partnerships also play an important role in improving the livelihoods of poor workers. They can facilitate the transfer of resources to start and upgrade entrepreneurial activities. Financial services should be linked with wider business development services. The Rabobank Foundation, for example, conducts "value chain finance", and provides grants, short- and long-term loans for small holders and cooperatives in food and agribusiness. For some risks, Governments or aggregators, such as contract farming companies, may be better suited to take insurance and pass the benefits to poor workers, an example of which is weather index insurance in Mexico. The Access to Insurance Initiative, a global partnership working with insurance supervisors, promotes access to insurance for low-income populations worldwide.

4. Social protection to reducing vulnerability and building resilience

49. Social protection is an essential policy instrument to eradicate poverty and invest in human resources development. Social protection has evolved to include a wide set of policies that aim to address vulnerabilities, risks and deprivation, and enhance the capacities and resilience of people, in particular people living in poverty and vulnerable groups.

50. While social protection systems are widely accepted as major tools for addressing the multiple dimensions of poverty and deprivation, the fundamental

human right to social security remains unfulfilled for the large majority of the world's population. Only 27 per cent of the global population enjoy access to comprehensive social security systems, whereas 73 per cent are covered partially or not at all. Despite these challenges, more than 30 low- and middle-income countries have universal or nearly universal social protection programmes, and more than 100 countries are scaling up social protection and expanding benefits to new population groups. Several middle-income countries have significantly extended various elements of their social protection systems, particularly since the early 2000s. Low-income countries often target social protection more narrowly: it is temporary, on a small-scale and limited to certain areas or population. While these social assistance measures are effective in lifting people out of poverty, the risk of their falling back into poverty is high. In rural Ethiopia, only 40 per cent of those who escaped poverty remained above the poverty line between 1999 and 2009. In Viet Nam, approximately one third of households that escaped poverty fell back into poverty.[27]

51. Social transfer measures, including cash transfer schemes, have successfully reduced poverty in Africa, Asia, Central and Eastern Europe and Latin America, potentially delivering much faster results than those expected from the trickle-down effects of economic policies. In South Africa, non-contributory grants have reduced the poverty gap by more than one third; the *Oportunidades* programme in Mexico has reduced the numbers living in poverty by 10 per cent; and in Kyrgyzstan, the social protection programme has reduced the number of people living in extreme poverty by 24 per cent. Social transfers and taxation have also reduced poverty by more than 50 per cent in most European countries, while the expansion of food assistance in the United States has reduced the number of households in extreme poverty by half.[28]

52. By 2012, the number of developing countries with social assistance programmes had risen to more than 160, from less than 20 in 1990.[29] A number of emerging economies have introduced unemployment benefit schemes as a means of ensuring income security for unemployed workers and facilitating their job search in the formal economy. More recently, graduation programmes, time-bound and designed to empower the poorest of poor to move and stay out of poverty in a sustainable manner, with components including asset transfer, consumption support through cash transfers, health-care, savings, and social integration at the community level, have gained popularity. In particular, BRAC operates graduation programmes in 12 countries, serving 138 million people. This approach uses participatory selection to target the poorest of the poor, and graduation occurs when households achieve economic and social advancement over a period of time. Evaluations of the programme have shown broad improvements in key dimensions of economic and non-economic well-being in most countries where data are available. The available

[27] Andrew Shepherd and others, "What policy lessons can be learnt from cases of pro-poorest growth?" (London, Overseas Development Institute, 2016).

[28] ILO, *World Social Protection Report 2014-15: Building economic recovery, inclusive development and social justice*, (Geneva, 2014).

[29] Institute of Development Studies, International Social Science Council and UNESCO, *World Social Science Report 2016, Challenging Inequalities: Pathways to a Just World*, (Paris, UNESCO, 2016).

evidence suggests that the long-term effects of the programme outweigh the up-front costs.

53. A growing number of countries have also introduced universal coverage for old-age pensions, with significant positive impacts on poverty reduction. Other countries are expanding the coverage of disability and maternity benefits, and cash transfers for children of poor households. Nearly one in seven countries in the world provides non-contributory child benefits on a universal basis, primarily in Europe and a few other OECD countries. In Mongolia, the Child Money programme is the only universal child grant in developing countries that targets all children under 18 years of age. In South Africa, the Universal Disability Grants are the only non-contributory allowances covering persons with disabilities and persons with chronic illnesses such as HIV/AIDS. In the Plurinational State of Bolivia, the old-age pension (Renta Dignidad), the first universal pension scheme in Latin America, successfully lowered poverty by 14 per cent, reduced the incidence of child labour and increased school enrolment to almost 100 per cent.

54. To achieve progressive realization of universal coverage requires strengthening national policies and strategies to develop comprehensive social protection systems as well as designing, reforming, or extending the coverage of social assistance measures to provide minimum guarantees for the poor and the most vulnerable. Following the adoption of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (see General Assembly resolution 69/313, annex), countries are committed to providing fiscally sustainable and nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, with a focus on those furthest below the poverty line and vulnerable.

V. Means of implementation: resource mobilization and partnerships for poverty eradication

55. Eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, will require a mix of financial resources and non-financial policies and regulations, for example, technological innovation and transfer for climate change mitigation and adaptation, capacity-building for people and institutions, inclusive globalization, fair trade and the creation of enabling environments at the national and international levels.

56. In developing countries, a significant proportion of financial resources are expected to come from domestic sources, complemented by ODA and flows from private sources. Domestic public finance is a central component of financing the sustainable development agenda, and will be critical in financing social development. To boost domestic public finance, countries can improve their tax collection and enforcement systems, combat corruption and reduce illicit financial flows, and strengthen international tax cooperation. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda also emphasized the importance of aligning government expenditure with sustainable development, for example, reaffirming the commitment to rationalize inefficient fossil fuel subsidies while minimizing possible adverse development impacts and protecting the poor and affected communities.

57. Inclusive, equitable and sustainable development also benefits from renewed and strengthened global partnerships. Between 2014 and 2015, ODA from members of the Development Assistance Committee of OECD rose by 6.9 per cent in real terms, reaching $131.6 billion. Bilateral aid to the poorest countries also rose by 4 per cent in real terms. Bilateral aid to the least developed countries rose by 4 per cent in real terms in 2015 from 2014, amounting to $25 billion. Preliminary ODA figures indicate that total ODA from members of the Development Assistance Committee to the least developed countries in 2014 was $41 billion, or 0.09 per cent of gross national income, significantly below the United Nations targets of 0.15-0.20 per cent. According to OECD data, ODA to social infrastructure — which includes governance, education, population, health and water and sanitation, amounted to $63.2 billion in 2014, equivalent to 38.2 per cent of total ODA.

58. Private investment is also critical to realizing the Sustainable Development Goals. However, private finance and investment is not always allocated to areas where it is needed for sustainable development. As regards foreign direct investment, gross inflows of foreign direct investment to developing countries are expected to decline in 2016 to $675 billion, from $765 billion in 2015, but are projected to reach $818 billion in 2018.[30] These flows can complement domestic private sector activity and contribute to successful economic growth, especially when they foster broad-based and labour-intensive growth, employment, income growth and poverty reduction. Countries should make the best use of all available resources, and should have national sustainable development financing strategies that set out what resources are available and how they can be used for achieving sustainable development. Such national strategies can then set priorities for investment on the basis of national circumstances, and focusing on ending poverty in all its forms and dimensions while leaving no one behind.

VI. Conclusion and recommendations

59. Eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, requires greater efforts at the national and international levels to leverage the accomplishments and lessons learned in implementing the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. This will ensure the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in their entirety. Fostering conditions for sustainable poverty eradication requires implementing a broad set of mutually reinforcing social and economic policies and strategies as well as leveraging the synergies between them. High priority areas include promoting structural transformation; inclusive and pro-poor growth; the creation of decent employment; investing in education and health; agriculture and rural development; infrastructure development; empowering people; and providing universal social protection. Investments in these areas should be complimented by combating rising inequality and fostering an enabling international environment, including the provision of official development assistance, strengthening public institutions and making them more transparent and inclusive, creating broad policy coalitions and fostering policy coherence and integration.

[30] United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, *Global Investment Trends Monitor*, No. 24 (6 October 2016).

60. In the light of the priority areas set out above, the Commission for Social Development may wish to consider the following recommendations:

(a) **Prioritize formulating and implementing comprehensive, integrated and coordinated approaches to achieve sustainable poverty eradication. This entails addressing the structural causes of poverty, including high and rising inequalities, insufficient redistributional policies, biases against people living in poverty in public spending, taxation and trade and social exclusion;**

(b) **Prioritize and commit sufficient resources to enhance human capacity by investing in education, health care, safe drinking water and sanitation. Countries are encouraged to progressively realize universal social protection, including floors, while at the same time extending the coverage of social transfer measures to provide minimum guarantees to the most vulnerable;**

(c) **Prioritize and commit sufficient resources to develop the human and physical assets of people living in poverty and ensure that credit, land, and labour markets work better for them. Greater attention should be given to strengthening access to land and the land rights of women and indigenous groups;**

(d) **Promote structural economic transformation in order to provide productive economic opportunities and raise standards of living and incomes, generate decent employment and increase the tax base to allow public revenues to meet the recurrent costs for social expenditures and infrastructure development, including through supporting income-generating activities such as microenterprises, small and medium-sized enterprises;**

(e) **Increase public spending on agriculture and rural infrastructure, improve access to credit and markets as well as promote rural economic transformation through development of the rural non-farm economy;**

(f) **Continue to work with development partners to create an enabling environment for inclusive, multi-stakeholder partnerships.**

United Nations E/CN.5/2017/4

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
22 November 2016

Original: English

Commission for Social Development
Fifty-fifth session
1-10 February 2017
Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly

Mainstreaming disability in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report has been prepared in response to Economic and Social Council resolution 2015/4, in which the Council requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Commission for Social Development, at its fifty-fifth session, a report on the implementation of that resolution, including the Chair's summary of the discussions and the proposals made during the multi-stakeholder panel discussion on disability at the Commission's fifty-fourth session. The report provides an overview of the inclusion of disability in existing international development frameworks, as well as of the status of persons with disabilities in social and economic development. It notes that, worldwide, persons with disabilities are still at a disadvantage in many aspects of their participation in development processes, mechanisms and institutions. The report presents the information concerning: (a) the review and follow-up mechanisms of relevant international frameworks on disability-inclusive development; (b) the role of the Commission for Social Development in mainstreaming disability in the development agenda; (c) summary of the multi-stakeholder panel discussion on disability held at the fifty-fourth session of the Commission for Social Development; and (d) conclusions and recommendations.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report has been prepared in response to Economic and Social Council resolution 2015/4, "Promoting the rights of persons with disabilities and strengthening the mainstreaming of disability in the post-2015 development agenda", in which the Council requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Commission for Social Development, at its fifty-fifth session, a report on the implementation of resolution 2015/4, integrating the Chair's summary of the discussions and the proposals made during the multi-stakeholder panel discussion held during the Commission's fifty-fourth session.

2. Persons with disabilities still face marginalization and significant barriers to their inclusion and participation in society and in development. The extent of inequalities experienced by persons with disabilities in all areas of development is often the result of shortcomings in the structural, social, political and cultural environments in which they reside, including lack of accessibility of physical and virtual environments; institutional barriers; discrimination; exclusion; and unequal opportunities.

3. In order to address these challenges, the United Nations has reinforced its commitment to the full and equal participation of persons with disabilities in a series of international instruments, in particular the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities,[1] which codified universal human rights and inclusive development from the disability perspective.

4. Building on the decades of work carried out by the United Nations, disability is now clearly recognized as a cross-cutting development issue on the global agenda. This is evidenced by the hosting, in New York in 2013, of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the realization of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities: the way forward, a disability-inclusive development agenda towards 2015 and beyond, and its outcome document,[2] as well as the subsequent recognition and commitment to the specific needs of persons with disabilities in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,[3] the Addis Ababa Action Agenda[4] and other recently adopted development frameworks in the fields of disaster risk reduction, humanitarian action, financing for development and urban development.

5. The Commission for Social Development has played a principal role in mainstreaming disability into the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, both through its annual consideration of the social situation of persons with disabilities and through the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on Disability of the Commission for Social Development from 1994 to 2014.[5] In view of the urgent need to ensure that disability is effectively mainstreamed in the implementation of 2030 Agenda, and in light of the expiration of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on Disability, the Commission, at its fifty-third and fifty-fourth sessions, considered the

[1] General Assembly resolution 61/106, annex I.
[2] General Assembly resolution 68/3.
[3] General Assembly resolution 70/1.
[4] General Assembly resolution 69/313, annex.
[5] General Assembly resolution 48/96, annex, sect. IV, para. 2.

possibility and modalities for another monitoring mechanism to further strengthen the mainstreaming of disability in development.

6. The present report presents existing international frameworks on disability-inclusive development and their reviews and follow-up mechanisms. It explains the history and the evolution of the role of the Commission for Social Development in mainstreaming disability in the development agenda and provides a summary of the multi-stakeholder panel discussion at the fifty-fourth session of the Commission for Social Development on the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda in light of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. In this context, the report makes recommendations for effectively mainstreaming disability in the implementation of the internationally agreed development goals and provides options with regard to an appropriate complementary follow-up and review mechanism, taking into account existing intergovernmental mechanisms and processes.

II. Existing frameworks guiding the inclusion of disability in development

7. The concept and practice of including disability in development has gained, and continues to gain, increasing attention worldwide. Key frameworks adopted by the General Assembly in advancing disability-inclusive development include the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons, adopted in 1982,[3] the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (1993),[4] and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006).

8. In addition, recent international development frameworks incorporate the rights and perspectives of persons with disabilities. The United Nations development agenda, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030,[5] the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the New Urban Agenda,[6] further define the pathway to ensuring the inclusion of disability in efforts to achieve the development goals. The inclusion of disability in these major frameworks is described below.

9. The purpose of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons, adopted by the General Assembly in 1982, was to promote effective measures for the prevention of disability, rehabilitation and the realization of the goals of "full participation" of persons with disabilities in social life and development, and of "equality", which means opportunities equal to those of the whole population and an equal share in the improvement in living conditions resulting from social and economic development.

10. In 1993, the General Assembly adopted the 22 Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, which provide a framework for the further implementation of the goals of equality and full

[3] See General Assembly resolution 37/52.
[4] General Assembly resolution 48/96, annex.
[5] General Assembly resolution 69/283, annex II.
[6] See A/CONF.226/4, annex.

participation of persons with disabilities in social life and development, as set forth in the World Programme of Action.

11. In addition, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, adopted by the General Assembly in 2006, is an instrument for inclusive development, promoting the universal human rights of persons with disabilities from the disability perspective.

12. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development reflects the needs of persons with disabilities and commits Member States to ensuring their inclusion and participation in society. In particular, the Sustainable Development Goals explicitly take persons with disabilities and the inclusion of disability into account under seven targets. These targets address access to education and employment; availability of schools that are sensitive and responsive to students with disabilities; the inclusion and empowerment of persons with disabilities; accessible transport, as well as accessible public and green spaces; and building the capacity of countries to collect disaggregated data by disability. Moreover, the 2030 Agenda commits Member States to providing persons with disabilities with access to life-long learning opportunities that help them to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to be able to take advantage of opportunities and to participate fully in society. In addition, the global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals calls for data disaggregation by disability, where relevant, and includes 11 indicators that refer explicitly to disability. These indicators focus on: social protection; disparities in education; schools with adapted infrastructure and materials for students with disabilities; earnings by employed persons with disabilities; persons with disabilities living at income levels below the 50 per cent median income level; access to convenient public transport and public open spaces; physical and sexual harassment; representation in public institutions; and inclusive decision-making.

13. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda also includes explicit references to persons with disabilities and disability, in particular, by committing Members States to providing social protection to persons with disabilities; encouraging the full participation of persons with disabilities in the labour market; delivering quality education to all by reaching children with disabilities; upgrading education facilities that are disability sensitive; facilitating accessible technology for persons with disabilities; and increasing the collection and use of data disaggregated by disability.

14. The Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, held in 2015, adopted the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, which recognizes persons with disabilities as a group whose active participation, involvement and contribution of expertise in disaster preparedness optimizes the resilience and the chances of survival of persons with disabilities in disasters. The Framework further sets out principles of universal design and accessibility in all aspects of disaster risk mitigation and preparedness, and calls for universally accessible responses. The Sendai Framework represents a milestone in the advancement of disability-inclusive measures in international instruments.

15. The New Urban Agenda, adopted at the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Development (Habitat III), held in Quito from 17 to 20 October 2016, promotes measures and policies to enhance the inclusion and

participation of persons with disabilities in cities and urban settlements. In particular, it promotes: (a) housing policies, road safety as well as basic physical and social infrastructure that focus on the needs of persons with disabilities; (b) employment with attention to the needs and potential of persons with disabilities and (c) information and communications technologies that are accessible for persons with disabilities. The Agenda also calls for the collection of data disaggregated by disability.

16. The first World Humanitarian Summit, held in 2016, included a special session on the inclusion of persons with disabilities into humanitarian action, in which stakeholders, including some participating Member States, launched the Charter on the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action.[10] The Charter underscored the international commitment to integrating the rights and perspectives of persons with disabilities in all aspects and stages of humanitarian responses. In particular, the Charter commits to non-discrimination, participation of persons with disabilities, inclusive response and services and cooperation and coordination among all development and humanitarian actors.

III. The status of persons with disabilities in social and economic development

17. Poverty is more common among persons with disabilities. A study analysing the prevalence of disability among poor households in 15 developing countries found that the economic situation of households that had at least one member with a disability was worse than that of households without any person with a disability.[11] In a separate study, in 18 of 21 States that are members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), working-age people with disabilities showed higher poverty rates (defined as less than 60 per cent of the median-adjusted disposable income) than those without disabilities. On average, across OECD countries, the income of persons with disabilities was 12 per cent lower than the national average, and as much as 20 to 30 per cent lower in some OECD member States.[12] In addition to lower incomes, persons with disabilities often face extra costs associated with disability, including costs associated with assistive devices, personal support, transportation and housing needs, making it even more likely to be exposed to poverty.

18. Working-age persons with disabilities are less likely to be employed than their non-disabled peers. In 50 countries surveyed for the *World Report on Disability*,[13] the overall employment rate among persons with disabilities was about 10 percentage points lower than the rate among persons without disabilities. In OECD countries, employment rates for persons with disabilities have been found to

[10] See http://humanitariandisabilitycharter.org.

[11] Sophie Mitra, Aleksandra Posarac and Brandon Vick, "Disability and poverty in developing countries: a snapshot from the World Health Survey", Social Protection and Labour Discussion Paper, No. 1109 (Washington, D.C., World Bank, 2011).

[12] Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, "Sickness, disability and work: keeping on track in the economic downturn", background paper for the High-level Forum, Stockholm, 14 and 15 May 2009.

[13] World Health Organization and World Bank, *World report on disability* (Geneva, 2011).

be half of those for persons without disabilities.[12] Persons with disabilities are often discouraged from looking for a job. For those who look for work, employment opportunities are scarce, owing to inaccessible workplaces and information, discrimination and negative attitudes towards persons with disabilities, and misconceptions about their capacity to work. Due to the lack of opportunities for wage employment for people with disabilities, they are often obliged to generate income though their own enterprises.[14] In a study of 16 developing countries, self-employment rates tended to be higher for persons with disabilities than for persons without disabilities.[15] Self-employed workers tend to be in more vulnerable situations, as they are more likely to experience sudden unemployment or underemployment, and to lack basic social security.

19. When employed, people with disabilities are more likely to be in part-time jobs. A 2010 study in 29 countries showed that the percentage of part-time employees among employed persons with disabilities was higher than for their non-disabled peers in all countries.[15] Disabled persons are often restricted to part-time employment because existing options for full time employment do not give them sufficient time to travel to and from work or to deal with health concerns. However, people with disabilities can take part in in full time work if reasonable accommodations at the workplace, and for transport to the workplace, are available. Persons with disabilities are also more likely to be in low-paid jobs with poor career prospects and working conditions, especially as legislation in some countries provides exceptions that allow for the possibility of the reduction of the applicable minimum wage for persons with disabilities.[16]

20. While social protection systems may often play a key role in partially correcting some of the labour market inequalities and meeting the needs of persons with disabilities with regard to income security, health protection and social inclusion, in some countries, persons with disabilities are not provided with sustained assistance. Most countries expanded their social protection programmes to include disability in the 1960s and the 1970s, and as of 2012-2013, national legislation in almost all countries provides social protection schemes with cash benefits for persons with disabilities. However, some countries have established only a lump-sum benefit instead of periodic cash benefits, and in many countries, such periodic benefits cover only workers in the formal economy and their families, excluding children with disabilities and leaving persons with disabilities who have not had the opportunity to contribute to social insurance for sufficiently long periods of time without benefits.[17]

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[14] Kamal Lamichhane, *Disability, Education and Employment in Developing Countries: From Charity to Investment* (Cambridge University Press, 2015).

[15] S. Mizonoya and S. Mitra (2012), "Is there a disability gap in employment rates in developing countries?", Fordham University, Department of Economics, Discussion Paper No. 2012-03, available at http://legacy.fordham.edu/images/academics/graduate_schools/gsas/economics/dp2012_03_Mizonoya_Mitra.pdf.

[16] International Labour Organization, *Minimum wage systems*, International Labour Conference, Report III (Part 1B), 103rd session *(Geneva, 2014)*, available at http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_235287.pdf.

[17] See International Labour Organisation, *World Social Protection Report 2014/15: Building economic recovery, inclusive development and social justice* (Geneva, 2014).

21. Children with disabilities are less likely to start school, to attend school and to complete the full education cycle compared to their non-disabled peers.[17,18] In 2002-2003, in 51 countries, only 53 per cent of people between the ages of 18 and 49 with disabilities had completed primary education, compared to 67 per cent of those without disabilities. On average, persons with disabilities are also likely to spend fewer years in schools than persons without disabilities (usually one or two years less). As a result, adults with disabilities typically have lower educational attainment.[17]

22. People with disabilities experience significantly greater vulnerability to secondary health conditions, comorbid conditions, age-related conditions and higher rates of premature death.[19,20] Although persons with disabilities have more health-care needs compared to people without disabilities, they are more often unsuccessful in getting care when needed. In a study in 51 countries, persons with disabilities were 20 per cent less likely to be able to afford health care. People with disabilities were also more likely to be unable to afford transportation to medical facilities or to have no means of transport to reach health-care locations. In addition, people with disabilities have more difficulties in finding health-care providers with accessible equipment and adequate skills.[17]

23. Limited data are available on access to water and sanitation by persons with disabilities, but a 2011 review[21] highlighted a number of barriers that could leave persons with disabilities at a higher risk of lacking access to these basic services. These barriers arise from obstacles in the built environment, geographical conditions and social and institutional factors.[22]

24. Compared to the general population, persons with disabilities face higher risks and are disproportionately affected by conflicts, disasters and other humanitarian crises. They often face lack of accessible information and communication in early warning and disaster responses. During conflict or in the aftermath of a disaster, they experience greater exclusion in evacuation and in access to food, water, sanitation and other shelter and relief services.[23] In many disaster situations, the mortality rate of persons with disabilities is two to four times higher than that of the

[18] Deon Filmer, "Disability, Poverty, and Schooling in Developing Countries: Results from 14 Household Surveys", *World Bank Economic Review*, vol. 22, No. 1 (January 2008).

[19] Disability Rights Commission, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, "Equal treatment: closing the gap: a formal investigation into the physical health inequalities experienced by people with learning disabilities and/or mental health problems" (London, Disability Rights Commission, 2006).

[20] Andrew Nocon, "Equal treatment: Closing the Gap: Background evidence for the DRC's formal investigation into health inequalities experienced by people with learning disabilities or mental health problems" (Disability Rights Commission, United Kingdom, 2006), available at http://disability-studies.leeds.ac.uk/files/library/nocon-Evidence-paper-2006.pdf.

[21] N. Groce, N. Bailey, R. Lang, J. F. Trani and M. Kett, "Water and sanitation issues for persons with disabilities in low- and middle-income countries: a literature review and discussion of implications for global health and international development", *Journal of Water and Health*, vol. 9, No. 4, 2011.

[22] H. Jones and B. Reed, *Water and sanitation for disabled people and other vulnerable groups: Designing services to improve accessibility* (Water, Engineering and Development Centre, Loughborough University, United Kingdom, 2005).

[23] See A/65/173.

persons without disabilities.[25] A survey of more than 5,000 persons with disabilities in 137 countries in 2013 showed that most persons with disabilities had no personal preparedness plan for disasters and few were aware of a disaster management plan in their community. Most persons with disabilities indicated that they would have difficulties to evacuate immediately in the event of a sudden disaster.[25]

25. Lack of accessible physical and virtual environments remains one of the main obstacles for the inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities in development. The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) took a major step in 2011 by setting international standards for the built environment, reflecting aspects of accessibility in buildings to enable all persons, regardless of disability, to reach, enter, use and safely evacuate a building independently. Furthermore, various countries have produced legislation requiring accessibility to the physical environment. Nevertheless, physical barriers remain even in countries with such legislation. In many countries, the degree to which physical spaces have been made accessible is unknown. Existing studies of public buildings in selected European countries suggest that physical accessibility is far from universal.[26]

26. Accessibility of virtual environments is becoming increasingly important as information and communication technologies, such as web services, mobile devices, television and computers, become ever essential for daily participation in work, education and in social and cultural spheres. Computers and the Internet also can decrease the sense of isolation for persons with disabilities, who may be homebound or have limited mobility. ISO standards for web accessibility exist and e-accessibility checker software has been developed to assist those who wish to verify if their websites satisfy the ISO accessibility criteria. Despite the existence of these standards, the large majority of websites do not comply with them, including governmental websites.[27]

IV. Review and follow-up mechanisms for disability-inclusion in development

27. Within the United Nations system, various review and follow-up processes and mechanisms exist for assessing the implementation of human rights and

[24] Rehabilitation International, the Nippon Foundation and ESCAP, "Sendai Statement to Promote Disability-inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilient, Inclusive and equitable Societies in Asia and the Pacific" (24 April 2014), available at http://www.riglobal.org/sendai-statement-to-promote-disability-inclusive-disaster-risk-reduction-for-resilient-inclusive-and-equitable-societies-in-asia-and-the-pacific/.

[25] United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, *Living with Disability and Disasters: United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction 2013 Survey on Living with Disabilities and Disasters — Key Findings*, 2014, available from http://www.unisdr.org/2014/iddr/documents/2013DisabilitySurveyReport_030714.pdf.

[26] Accessible public buildings indicators on political participation of persons with disabilities (2014), available at http://fra.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/data-and-maps/comparative-data/political-participation/accessible-buildings.

[27] *United Nations E-Government Survey 2014: E-Government for the Future We Want*, available at http://unpan3.un.org/egovkb/Portals/egovkb/Documents/un/2014-Survey/E-Gov_Complete_Survey-2014.pdf.

development frameworks for persons with disabilities. These mechanisms and processes are described below.

28. The implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons, the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has been reviewed and followed up by the General Assembly, which has regularly requested that the Secretary-General submit reports on their implementation. The World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons envisaged that the United Nations system would carry out a periodic evaluation of progress made in implementing the Programme. This has prompted the General Assembly, since 1982, to request the Secretary-General to submit regular reports on issues related to the inclusion of disability. In 1993, following the adoption of the Standard Rule, Member States requested the Secretary-General to report biennially to the Assembly on the progress of efforts to ensure the equalization of opportunities and full inclusion of persons with disabilities in the various bodies of the United Nations system. After the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities by the Assembly in 2006, it has regularly requested the Secretary-General to submit reports on the status of the Convention and its Optional Protocol.

29. The Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities were both established to monitor the implementation of the Convention. Article 40 of the Convention stipulates, "The States Parties shall meet regularly in a Conference of States Parties in order to consider any matter with regard to the implementation of the present Convention". Since 2008, nine sessions of the Conference of States Parties have been held. At these sessions, the States parties considered themes related to disability-inclusive development and the implementation of the Convention and provided a forum for the sharing of best practices. Panels and interactive dialogues have been organized on topics such as accessibility and reasonable accommodation; community-based rehabilitation; technology; women, children and youth with disabilities; reducing inequalities for persons with disabilities; social protection and poverty reduction strategies; addressing the vulnerability and exclusion of persons with disabilities in disasters and humanitarian crises; promoting the rights of persons with mental and intellectual disabilities; disability data and statistics; using the Convention as an instrument for achieving the Millennium Development Goals; and, most recently, for achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

30. Article 34 to 39 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities established the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, as well as its functions. The Committee is a body comprising 18 independent experts, which monitors implementation of the Convention. All States parties have to submit regular reports to the Committee on implementation of the rights enshrined in the Convention. The Committee examines each report and makes suggestions and general recommendations on the report. As of November 2015, the Committee has received reports from 95 State parties. The Optional Protocol to the Convention (see General Assembly resolution 61/106), which entered into force at the same time as the Convention, establishes two additional mandates for the Committee: (a) the receipt and examination of individual complaints; (b) the undertaking of inquiries in the case of reliable evidence of grave and systematic violations of the Convention.

The Committee normally holds two sessions per year. According to the Convention, the Committee is to report on its activities to the General Assembly and to the Economic and Social Council every two years. The Committee may make suggestions and general recommendations based on the examination of reports and information received from the States parties.

31. Regarding the internationally agreed development goals, since 2007, the General Assembly has regularly reviewed progress in the implementation of the goals for persons with disabilities based on reports prepared by the Secretary-General. In addition, the Assembly has asked the Secretary-General, in coordination with United Nations agencies, to submit a flagship report by 2018.[28] The report is expected to reflect progress made in addressing the relevant internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities and the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

32. The Human Rights Council has also been playing a role in reviewing and following up on the realization of the rights of persons with disabilities, specifically based on the report submitted by the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to the Council. The Special Rapporteur also submits reports to the General Assembly. These annual reports present the activities undertaken in fulfilling the mandate of the Special Rapporteur and include thematic studies on key issues related to the advancement of the rights of persons with disabilities. Previous reports have discussed social protection and participation in decision making for persons with disabilities. The Special Rapporteur was appointed by the Human Rights Council in 2014 for a period of three years and was mandated, inter alia, to: (a) make concrete recommendations on how to better promote and protect the rights of persons with disabilities, including on how to promote development that is inclusive of and accessible to persons with disabilities; (b) conduct, facilitate and support the provision of technical assistance, capacity-building and international cooperation in support of national efforts for the effective realization of the rights of persons with disabilities; and (c) raise awareness of the rights of persons with disabilities.[29] To fulfil this mandate, the Special Rapporteur gathers, requests, receives and exchanges information and communications from and with States and other relevant sources, including persons with disabilities and their representative organizations and other civil society organizations, on violations of the rights of persons with disabilities; and conducts country visits at the invitation of Governments.

33. The adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development prompted additional attention to disability-inclusion in follow-up and review processes at national and international levels. The Agenda establishes that the follow-up and review processes at national, regional and global levels should be guided by data that is disaggregated by disability and encourages Member States to conduct regular and inclusive reviews of progress at the national and subnational levels, which are country-led and country-driven. These national reviews serve as a basis for the regular reviews by the high-level political forum, which meets under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council. These reviews are voluntary, State-led, undertaken by both developed and developing countries and involve multiple stakeholders. In 2016, the high-level political forum received 22 reviews, 15 of which included information

[28] General Assembly resolution 69/142.

[29] Human Rights Council resolution 26/20.

on disability issues. Guidelines on how to reflect disability in national monitoring reviews do not exist, but they could be beneficial in guiding countries on how to present progress towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for persons with disabilities.

34. The report of the Secretary-General on progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals, submitted to the high-level political forum, presents data on the individual Goal indicators. The first report, submitted in 2016, did not include any data on disability. Capacity-building at the country level and compilation of disability data at the international level are needed to ensure that the report can present progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals for persons with disabilities.

35. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda encouraged the Secretary-General to convene an Inter-Agency Task Force to report annually on progress in implementing the financing for development outcomes and the means of implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. It specified that the Task Force would advise intergovernmental follow-up on progress, including implementation gaps, and make recommendations for corrective action. The first report of the Task Force, released in 2016, identifies disability data and indicators, which could be used to monitor the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

36. The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 calls upon the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction to support the implementation, follow-up and review of the Framework by preparing periodic reviews on progress, in particular for the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction. As part of the review and follow-up process of the Sendai framework, in 2015 the General Assembly established an open-ended intergovernmental expert working group on indicators and terminology relating to disaster risk reduction to develop indicators to measure global progress on the Framework's seven agreed targets.[10] The group should conclude its work by December 2016. If the indicators do not explicitly refer to persons with disabilities, do not reflect the needs and perspectives of persons with disabilities and do not ask for data disaggregated by disability, the review and follow-up of progress made with regard to the Sendai Framework for persons with disabilities will lack basic evidence. The Assembly also decided to give due consideration to the review of global progress in the implementation of the Sendai Framework as part of the integrated and coordinated follow-up processes to United Nations conferences and summits. In particular, this review is to be aligned with the Economic and Social Council, the high-level political forum on sustainable development and the quadrennial comprehensive policy review cycles, as appropriate, taking into account the contributions of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, the regional platforms for disaster risk reduction and the updated monitoring tool based on the Hyogo Framework for Action Monitor. The next Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, and the first Platform to consider a review of progress, will take place in Mexico in 2017.

37. The review and follow-up of progress made in advancing and implementing the achievements of the World Humanitarian Summit are yet to be established. The report of the Secretary-General on the outcome of the Summit, submitted to the

[10] General Assembly resolution 69/284.

seventy-first session of the General Assembly, proposes a way to assess progress over time for the consideration of the Member States.[31] There are no specific suggestions to review and follow up of progress made for persons with disabilities.

38. The inclusion of persons with disabilities in existing review processes and mechanisms is not always explicit, and needs to be further explored. The review and follow-up mechanisms of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda include disability indicators for persons with disabilities, but thus far no disability indicators have been included in other frameworks. In addition, although most frameworks ask for data disaggregated by disability, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the New Urban Agenda and the Charter on the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action, data disaggregation is just one aspect of review and follow-up. Once disability-disaggregated data are gathered, an assessment of progress is required, based on these data and other relevant evidence, and reported either in mandated reports or to the relevant forums. If review and follow-up mechanisms do not explicitly include persons with disabilities in all steps of the process, there is a risk that this group will be left behind. To avoid this, it would be beneficial to have guidelines and recommendations on how disability will be fully reviewed and followed up in the 2030 Agenda and other new development instruments.

V. Work of the Commission for Social Development for the advancement of persons with disabilities in development

39. The Standard Rules for the Equalization of Opportunities of Persons with Disabilities was the first framework to provide for a monitoring role for the Commission for Social Development on the inclusion of persons with disabilities in social and economic development. The Standard Rules established the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on Disability of the Commission for Social Development, an independent and active monitoring mechanism within the United Nations.[32] Under the Standard Rules, the Special Rapporteur reported on an annual basis to the Commission, taking into consideration the economic, social and cultural features of individual Member States. The reports presented findings on the promotion and monitoring of the implementation of the Standard Rules and presented recommendations, as requested by the Commission, on their further development and implementation. In carrying out his/her functions, the Special Rapporteur established direct dialogue with Member States and with local non-governmental organizations and experts, seeking their views and comments on any information intended to be included in the reports. Under the Standard Rules a panel of experts from civil society was also created to consult with the Special Rapporteur.[33]

[31] A/71/353.

[32] General Assembly resolution 48/96, annex, sect. IV, para 1.

[33] Three Special Rapporteurs on Disability have been appointed since the adoption of the Standard Rules. The first Special Rapporteur, Mr. Bengt Lindqvist (Sweden), was appointed in March 1994 and served through to December 2002. The second Special Rapporteur, Ms. Sheikha Hessa Al-Thani (Qatar), served for two terms from January 2002 to June 2009. The third Special Rapporteur, Mr. Shuaib Chalklen (South Africa), was initially appointed in August 2009. After his mandate was extended by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 2011/27, he served a second term from 2011 until 2014.

40. The role and mandate of the Special Rapporteur evolved over time in response to emerging demands. The Standard Rules required the Special Rapporteur to prepare analytical reports, establish dialogue with Member States and non-governmental organizations, to prepare questions to report on progress made in the implementation of the Standard Rules and to provide advisory services on the implementation and monitoring of the Standard Rules.

41. These functions were later expanded through Economic and Social Council resolutions 2008/26 and 2011/27, in which the Council requested the Special Rapporteur to: further advocate for the equalization of opportunities for the full enjoyment of all human rights by persons with disabilities and for the well-being of persons with disabilities in all aspects of life; to promote awareness and ratification of the Convention;[34] and to promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities and the mainstreaming of disability issues through international cooperation, in development programmes and in strategies at the national, regional and international levels.[35]

42. The Special Rapporteur was also requested to contribute to the high-level meeting on disability and development of the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly and its preparatory process, taking into account the priorities of the international community in strengthening efforts to ensure accessibility for and inclusion of persons with disabilities in all aspects of development efforts.[36]

43. In his final report to the Commission, in 2014, the Special Rapporteur offered a number of observations and recommendations for consideration by the Commission. He observed the need to place disability higher on the agenda of the work of the United Nations system and to strengthen institutional structures for existing political processes to ensure systematic monitoring and progress within the United Nations system. He recommended that the mainstreaming of disability in all development agendas and efforts, including in the Sustainable Development Goals and the post-2015 development agenda, "needs to be recognized as a priority, especially in the work of the United Nations, including the Commission for Social Development".[37] The Special Rapporteur further recommended that "the Commission for Social Development should consider options for establishing a standing mechanism to systematically review and monitor progress in realizing all internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities towards and beyond 2015 and to promote coordination, effective implementation and synergies among United Nations programmes".[38]

44. The Commission has also been the primary intergovernmental body responsible for following up on the Declaration and Programme of Action from the World Summit for Social Development, held in Copenhagen in 1995. The mandate includes a range of functions to advance social development for different groups, including persons with disabilities, through the sharing of comparative experiences, the identification of urgent issues and the formulation of substantive

[34] Economic and Social Council resolution 2008/20, para. 3.
[35] Economic and Social Council resolution 2011/27, para. 7.
[36] Ibid., para. 8.
[37] E/CN.5/2015/5, para. 68.
[38] Ibid., para. 70 (b).

recommendations for practical measures to assist the Economic and Social Council in carrying out its coordination functions.

45. The Commission played a significant role in facilitating the negotiation processes for the development of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities by providing views from a social development perspective and from experiences in the implementation of the Standard Rules and the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons. The Commission's leadership in and impact on this process is visible in the language of the resulting Convention. Notably, the Convention is both a human rights and a development instrument.

46. In recent years, the Commission has continued to evolve into an important forum for the comprehensive debate and substantive discussion of major social development issues. The Commission has used a range of mechanisms, including multi-stakeholder panel discussions. The Commission continues to be a strategic subsidiary body of the Economic and Social Council, with the key function of recommending action-oriented outcomes for the approval of the Council. The political visibility attached to sessions of the Commission provides an avenue to strengthen the impact of international frameworks for marginalized social groups, including persons with disabilities.

VI. Summary of the multi-stakeholder panel discussion on disability at the fifty-fourth session of the Commission for Social Development

47. In the context of the significant contribution of the Commission for Social Development to the advancement of the situation of persons with disabilities in development, and the recent adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, it has been recognized that the end of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on Disability of the Commission has produced a gap in consistent monitoring, review and follow-up of the situation and progress made in realizing the internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities. From the experience in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, and their failure to include adequate measures to address the requirements of persons with disabilities, there is recognition of the need for a specific mechanism to ensure that the global commitment to leave no one behind in the implementation of all 17 of the Sustainable Development Goals is also realized for persons with disabilities.

48. At the fifty-second session of the Commission, there was a discussion of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on Disability, whose term had expired in December 2014. The Commission made no decision concerning an extension of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur. Member States were divided in their views between establishing a new mechanism outside the Commission and the Economic and Social Council and maintaining a similar system within the Commission.

49. The Commission revisited this discussion during its fifty-third session. While the Commission recognized that the term of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur had expired, it postponed making a decision on a future mechanism for monitoring of progress made for persons with disabilities in development and society until its fifty-fourth session. The Commission agreed that a mechanism was needed, and that

such a mechanism should focus on monitoring progress made by Member States in the implementation of the post-2015 development framework for persons with disabilities. The Commission therefore decided that a multi-stakeholder panel discussion would take place during the fifty-fourth session of the Commission on the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda in the light of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, with the following objectives: (a) to further elaborate on how existing mechanisms and entities within the United Nations system can contribute to strengthening the mainstreaming of disability, (b) to enhance awareness and cooperation at all levels in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and (c) to consider the possibility and modalities of another monitoring mechanism.[39]

50. The multi-stakeholder panel discussion reviewed the historical evolution of disability within the United Nations system and the critical role played by the Commission in advancing the disability in the global development agenda over the past decades. The panel discussed the progressive shift in approaches to disability issues, from a social welfare perspective to a social development and human rights-based approach, and panellists commended the tremendous progress made in advancing disability in international development frameworks.

51. Panellists noted the now common understanding that social policies inclusive of persons with disabilities are sound investments in society, and that the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals relies on the involvement and inclusion of persons with disabilities in all development efforts. Panellists emphasized the relationship between social development and human rights, as articulated in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, as being interlinked, indivisible and mutually reinforcing. Panellists stressed that the international community needs to incorporate a social development and human rights perspective in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and to pursue a paradigm shift that places the rights, perspectives and well-being of persons with disabilities at the centre of all development efforts.

52. A number of panellists outlined examples of good practices from countries and programmes to illustrate how national practices have evolved and how they can be used to inform and guide the future work of the United Nations and Member States. Panellists noted the value of sharing lessons from country-level experiences to multi-stakeholder forums to inform, shape and strengthen future actions in social development for persons with disabilities.

53. The panel also discussed the role of the Commission in supporting a coherent and cohesive approach to disability within the United Nations system, in particular in relation to monitoring and measuring progress. Panellists and participants considered existing mechanisms to advance the disability platform within the United Nations system, bearing in mind the importance of avoiding duplication. The discussion also highlighted the importance of close cooperation between the United Nations system and Member States in ensuring the successful and coherent implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

54. The discussion identified the paucity of available data and information on persons with disabilities, and the difficulties they face in gaining inclusion and participation in society and development, as significant barriers. The panellists also

[39] Economic and Social Council resolution 2015/4, para 3.

felt that the Commission could obtain political commitment and ensure greater visibility for the rights of disabled persons through an ongoing review of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. Panellists and discussants proposed that the Commission build on progress made by taking on a leadership role in monitoring of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for persons with disabilities. Various proposals for monitoring mechanisms within the Commission to advance the rights, perspectives and well-being of persons with disabilities in social development were put forward.

VII. Options for review and follow-up mechanisms for monitoring progress in achieving the global development goals for persons with disabilities

55. The new international development landscape demands changes in the way the Commission for Social Development monitors and follows up on internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities. In line with the Commission's historic role in advancing the situation of persons with disabilities in development and society, the Commission has a unique opportunity to continue its leadership in the context of the 2030 Agenda and the fulfilment of its promise to leave no one behind. This can be achieved by mainstreaming disability in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and by promoting the inclusion of disability issues, building on the work of existing mechanisms within the United Nations system. During the multi-stakeholder panel discussion on disability at the fifty-fourth session of the Commission, panellists and Member States put forward a number of options on the establishment of a complementary monitoring mechanism.

56. There was significant support for the establishment of an annual multi-stakeholder panel under the aegis of the Commission to discuss, share experiences and review progress in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals for persons with disabilities. The work and discussions of the panel could be aligned with the annual themes of the high-level political forum and directly feed into the forum's dialogues. A proposal was made to create a standing forum on disability and development within the Commission or under the General Assembly. The former Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities suggested the possibility of the Economic and Social Council creating a permanent space in which United Nations agencies, the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and other relevant mandate holders can analyse progress in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, coordinate efforts to ensure coherence of approaches and support States in their reporting to the High-level Political Forum. It was also suggested by a Member State that a high-level technical panel be established to discuss the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, ensuring the participation of all stakeholders, including persons with disabilities, representatives of academia, civil society organizations and local governments.[40]

VIII. Conclusions and recommendations

57. The multi-stakeholder panel discussion clearly highlighted the need to develop a mechanism to ensure monitoring and follow-up on progress made towards the

[40] Proposal of the Permanent Mission of Nigeria to the United Nations.

realization of the 2030 Agenda and other internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities. In view of new international frameworks for development and the absence of a mandate for a Special Rapporteur under the aegis of the Commission to review and monitor progress in the advancement of the situation of persons with disabilities in development and society, the Commission is presented with an opportunity to build on its leadership in promoting disability-inclusive development.

58. Various mechanisms exist within the United Nations system to follow up on and support the realization of the rights and internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities. However, there is space to strengthen the coordination of these mechanisms and focus attention on the review, follow-up and implementation of the 2030 Agenda and other new development frameworks, including the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda or the New Urban Agenda.

59. During its fifty-fourth session, the Commission held a panel discussion to discuss possible future mechanisms to continue its leadership in advancing the rights, well-being and perspectives of persons with disabilities in development. Some options for consideration by the Commission have been proposed.

60. In view of the above, the following recommendations on realizing the internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities may be considered for action:

(a) **Member States should give due consideration to the proposals put forth in the multi-stakeholder panel discussion on disability held during the fifty-fourth session for the Commission for Social Development, including the proposed possibilities and modalities of another monitoring mechanism to support the work of the Commission and the Economic and Social Council in the monitoring, review and follow-up of the operationalization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other internationally agreed development goals with and for persons with disabilities;**

(b) **Governments and other stakeholders should take concrete steps to include persons with disabilities and their well-being and perspectives in policies and programmes for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and other internationally agreed development goals;**

(c) **Governments are urged to consistently collect and report on data concerning the situation of persons with disabilities in all follow-up and review processes related to the implementation of the 2030 Development Agenda and other internationally agreed development goals;**

(d) **Accessibility should be defined as an essential public good that is fundamental in all development policies and programmes and as both a means and goal of sustainable development;**

(e) **Governments, development agencies, international organizations and other stakeholders should recognize persons with disabilities as both beneficiaries and agents of change in all areas of development cooperation, including in disaster risk reduction, emergencies and humanitarian responses and urban development.**

United Nations E/CN.5/2017/5

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
21 November 2016

Original: English

Commission for Social Development
Fifty-fifth session
1-10 February 2017
Item 3 (b) (iii) of the provisional agenda*
Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly: review of relevant United Nations plans and programmes of action pertaining to the situation of social groups: World Programme of Action for Youth

Policies and programmes involving youth

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to Commission for Social Development resolution 53/1 of 10 February 2015. It recalls the need for robust, stand-alone youth policies coupled with consistent cross-sectoral efforts and provides a compilation of recent initiatives in the area of youth policies and programmes based on input received from Member States, United Nations entities and civil society organizations. The report focuses on the three broad thematic considerations included in the resolution: gender, participation and inclusion, and marginalized groups.

* E/CN.5/2016/L.1

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I. Introduction

1. On 10 February 2015, the Commission for Social Development adopted resolution 53/1 on policies and programmes involving youth, in which it requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Commission at its fifty-fifth session, a comprehensive report on the implementation of the resolution, including progress on the achievements and challenges in the implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth, in consultation with Member States, as well as with the relevant specialized agencies, funds and programmes and the regional commissions, taking into account the work done by the United Nations system, and encouraged the Secretariat to consult, as appropriate, with youth-led and youth-focused organizations. Further to that request, the present report is based on responses obtained from Member States,[1] members of the United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development[2] and youth-led structures.[3]

2. In its resolution 53/1, the Commission reiterated that the primary responsibility for implementing the World Programme of Action for Youth lies with Member States and urged Governments, in consultation with youth and youth organizations, to develop holistic and integrated youth policies based on the Programme of Action and to evaluate them regularly as part of the follow-up action on and implementation of the Programme of Action. Sections II to V of the present report explore policymaking and programming in the areas of gender, participation and marginalized groups. These thematic areas were identified as cross-cutting issues in the resolution and are pertinent to the development and implementation of robust and effective youth policies.

II. Current policy overview and recent developments

3. Since the adoption of the World Programme of Action for Youth, an increasing number of youth policies have been developed and revised from previous frameworks, particularly in recent years,[4] demonstrating the commitment by Governments to recognize, respond to and fulfil the needs, demands and aspirations of young people. While there is a lack of robust research and data, anecdotal

[1] Austria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Georgia, Lithuania, Mexico, Palau, Slovenia, South Africa, Swaziland, Sweden and Switzerland.

[2] Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, International Labour Organization, International Telecommunication Union, Office of the Envoy of the Secretary-General on Youth, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, United Nations Environment Programme, United Nations Industrial Development Organization, United Nations Office on Sport for Development and Peace, United Nations Population Fund, United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office and United Nations Volunteers.

[3] The Major Group for Children and Youth and the European Youth Forum.

[4] *The State of Youth Policy in 2014* (Berlin, Youth Policy Press, 2014). Available from http://www.youthpolicy.org/library/wp-content/uploads/library/2014_State_Youth_Policy_2014_En.pdf, and Alex Farrow, "Children, young people and participation", Youth policy working paper No. 3 (Berlin, Youth Policy Press, 2016). Available from http://www.youthpolicy.org/library/documents/children-young-people-and-participation-youth-policy-working-paper-no-3/.

evidence from youth policymakers and practitioners supports the effectiveness and impact of the youth policies and approaches that are highlighted in the present report.

4. While governmental entities with the mandate and authority in respect of youth policies often exist, Member States and United Nations entities have noted recurrent challenges. These include lack of political sway, expertise and high-level commitment, competing government priorities, insufficient financial and material resources, arduous intersectoral coordination, misperceptions about young people and inadequate human resources for implementation, monitoring and evaluation. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), in cooperation with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat and the Commonwealth Secretariat, is conducting a global capacity assessment on national youth entities to identify existing opportunities as well as gaps and challenges.

5. To address the limited implementation of national youth policies, there is a need to ensure that they are not developed and implemented in a vacuum but rather in coordination with other public policies that affect the lives of young people. National youth policies should therefore: (a) enable the development of cross-sectoral and integrated policy frameworks; (b) be based on empirical evidence and rigorous scientific analysis; (c) include young people in each stage of the youth policy process; and (d) be aligned with regional and global development frameworks, in particular in the light of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the World Programme of Action for Youth.

A. A cross-sectoral approach: youth mainstreaming

6. Effective ways to bolster youth development include developing robust, stand-alone youth policies and integrating young people into sectoral policies of line ministries. In recent years, a cross-sectoral approach to youth policies has emerged both as an imperative for effectiveness and as a pragmatic answer to two challenges: the increasingly large youth population in many countries, especially the developing countries, on the one hand; and the poor implementation and funding of youth policies, on the other. A cross-sectoral approach also helps to support the development of young people so that they can achieve their full potential in all spheres of their lives. Additionally, mainstreaming is a recognized methodology for ensuring effective policies for specific social cohorts, as shown by the successful example of gender mainstreaming.

7. Through an interministerial and inter-agency strategy, youth mainstreaming ensures that a youth lens is integrated into policy and legislation formulation and practice, programme analysis, planning, budgeting, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of cross-sectoral programmes and projects. Youth mainstreaming also shares the responsibility and accountability in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of youth policies by engaging with a broad number of stakeholders. Each public entity can review how its policies and programmes impact young people and optimize the use of financial and human resources.

8. Nevertheless, cross-sectoral approaches come at a cost: they require increased dialogue, planning and coordination within Governments, and even beyond, when

considering multilevel governance mechanisms, as in the case of decentralized or federal States. Strengthening the youth expertise of sectoral ministries and subnational governments is a winning strategy to build strong alliances on youth issues.

9. There is a continued need, however, to complement youth mainstreaming strategies with targeted interventions to promote the empowerment of young people and reduce inequalities, both among young people and between young people and the rest of the population. Inclusiveness and, in particular, social inclusion of young people, is one of the core aspirations of the 2030 Agenda. Target 10.2 of the Agenda emphasizes the need to empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status by 2030.

10. Increasingly, Member States' vision and approaches with respect to youth policies include the adoption of cross-sectoral measures to respond effectively to the conditions, needs and interests of all young people (Azerbaijan, Mexico, the Niger and Sweden). The Governments of Botswana, Jamaica, Malaysia and the Solomon Islands are currently mainstreaming youth development in line ministries, with the support of the Commonwealth Secretariat. Similarly, numerous structures, forums and mechanisms have been devised to coordinate cross-sectoral efforts in order to create conditions for improving young people's quality of life, well-being and access to rights (Austria, Fiji, Georgia, Mexico, Palau, Slovenia and Swaziland). The African Union Commission is launching a youth mainstreaming framework to position young people as key actors in shaping the work of the Commission on addressing Africa's challenges.

11. In the past, many Member States focused their youth mainstreaming work primarily on education, health and employment; however, this has now been expanded to other sectoral policies such as family, housing, transportation, justice, agriculture, leisure time or culture (Sweden). In particular, South Africa's two-pronged approach to youth development is aimed at mainstreaming youth development across various sectors while providing dedicated youth development platforms. In line with the call, in the World Programme of Action for Youth, for multilevel mechanisms for consultation, dissemination of information, coordination, monitoring and evaluation, Member States emphasized established structures for dialogue and follow-up and well-developed cooperation among the relevant institutions.

B. Other enablers of effective youth policies

1. Evidence and data

12. At the request of Member States, the Secretary-General, at the fifty-first session of the Commission for Social Development, proposed a set of indicators relating to the World Programme of Action for Youth in order to assist Member States in assessing the situation of young people. Evidence-based youth policymaking is about deepening the understanding of the current status of young people and translating data, experience and knowledge into appropriate and successful strategies and policies. Evidence includes quantitative and qualitative statistics and data and scientific as well as practical knowledge.

13. The need for youth-specific data collection and analysis has received continued attention from policymakers. To strengthen evidence-based youth policymaking, collaboration with national statistical entities has led to several youth monographs and indices (Australia, Indonesia and Vanuatu). The Commonwealth Secretariat has developed a global youth development index, which is a composite index of 18 indicators that collectively measure multidimensional progress on youth development in 183 countries, including 49 of the 53 Commonwealth countries. The index measures the status of young people across five domains, namely, level of education, health and well-being, employment and opportunity, political participation and civic participation.

14. Closely linked to data, indicators are an essential tool to assess the situation of young people and monitor progress towards implementing the World Programme of Action for Youth. In June 2015, Mexico added four new youth-related indicators to its national statistical framework, including the percentage of young people without access to health-care services, the percentage of young people below the well-being line and the youth unemployment rate.

15. Accurate baseline data are also a valuable tool to monitor and evaluate the impact of youth policies. While changes in the socioeconomic situation of young people may not always be attributable to youth policies, it remains necessary for youth policymakers to monitor not only output indicators but also socioeconomic indicators relating to young people.

16. Additionally, young people have become increasingly involved in the monitoring of youth and other sectoral policies, through several innovative means, such as training in data literacy, youth-led research or open data (Liberia). Mexico has engaged young people in the monitoring of policies, in particular by conducting youth consultations through the Citizens' Council for Monitoring Public Youth Policies. Shadow reporting by young people is another way to broaden knowledge on the impact of youth policies. In 2015, the European Youth Forum launched an extensive consultation open to youth-led organizations and published its *Shadow Report on Youth Policy: A youth perspective*.

17. Specific indicators measuring youth well-being and sectoral data disaggregated by age group have been included not only in monitoring and evaluation frameworks for national youth policies but also in regional youth action plans (the African Union and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM)). Youth data are also consolidated through regional information systems and observatories, such as the Youth Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean. The European Union Youth Monitor is composed of 41 indicators based on data provided by Eurostat or Eurobarometer surveys.

18. Efforts are still needed to identify and address youth data gaps. Owing to the lack of availability of specific budget information, it is still difficult for many Member States to track social investment targeting young people (Mexico). There is still little evidence worldwide about the situation of specific youth groups, such as indigenous youth, young migrants and refugees and young people with disabilities. In addition, some topics that are essential to youth well-being, such as youth political and civic engagement, are difficult to include in national statistical surveys because of conceptual and methodological issues.

2. Role of young people in policymaking

19. Young people can play an important role in any youth policy mechanism, both as the target of youth policies and as actors in implementation, especially when their role is clearly recognized in the national youth strategy. This inclusion ranges from comprehensive open consultations with young people to partnerships in the entire policymaking process. Benefits of the approach include averting the marginalization of young people, challenging their stigmatization, strengthening the credibility of State institutions, optimizing the impact of policies on young people and encouraging youth participation and empowerment. As discussed further in section IV below, numerous youth participation mechanisms under youth policies have been successfully implemented by Member States, including when consulting with non-organized youth (Brazil).

3. Alignment and coordination with regional frameworks

20. National youth policies can be strengthened when they are part of a regional youth development framework that allows for joint, coordinated and supported planning. A regional approach allows for intraregional sharing of experiences and good practices, as well as consistency in addressing regional issues concerning young people, such as climate change, migration or academic mobility. Streamlined reporting is another benefit of aligning national policy priorities and indicators with regional and international frameworks.

21. At the regional level, many Member States have recognized the specific needs of young people. The Ibero-American Youth Pact, adopted in 2016, reiterates the commitment of the signatories[5] to, inter alia, promoting youth policies, boosting youth participation and strengthening youth data. In June 2016, the Pacific Community agreed that mainstreaming youth in the regional organization's broader portfolio and programme delivery was a matter of priority. Ministers of Youth in the Caribbean updated the CARICOM Youth Development Action Plan with an improved monitoring and evaluation plan and a new timeline (2017-2021). Recognizing the need for continued investment in young people in Africa and for including them in the implementation framework of the African Youth Charter, the African Union decided that the 2017 African Union Summit would be held under the theme "Harnessing the demographic dividend through investment in youth". As part of the European Union Youth Strategy for 2010-2018, the European Union effectively implemented the European Union Youth Guarantee, which ensures that, within four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education, all young people receive a quality job offer, a traineeship or apprenticeship or the chance to continue their education.

4. 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

22. The 2030 Agenda identified priorities for young people around the world. The achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals depends on Governments addressing national priorities by taking ownership of the Agenda and turning the

[5] Argentina, Plurinational State of Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Portugal, Spain and Uruguay.

framework into measurable policies and action. Robust, innovative and progressive youth policies will serve to capture and concretize the Goals and provide a framework for their implementation to enable young people to fulfil their potential as active members of society.

23. The 2030 Agenda also recognizes the key role that today's young people are to play in ensuring its achievement by stating that young women and men are critical agents of change and will find in the new Goals a platform to channel their infinite capacities for activism into the creation of a better world. In order to ensure that young people are enabled to act as the critical agents of change the world needs them to be, significant investments will be needed as the 2030 Agenda is rolled out. At the global level, this work is taking place in the United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development Working Group on the 2030 Agenda. In November 2016, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the Office of the Envoy of the Secretary-General on Youth organized a one-day meeting to mobilize United Nations system technical expertise and guidance on youth-related aspects of the Agenda. In its regional workshops on evidence-based youth policies, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs supports Member States in reviewing the youth-related aspects of the Agenda and their importance and relevance to youth policies.

C. Progress in achieving the World Programme of Action for Youth

24. In support of the implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth, Member States and United Nations entities have enhanced their efforts in the field of youth development through the design or revision of youth policies and programmes. Member States have continued to establish, or are developing or reviewing, national youth policies, programmes, strategies or action plans (Austria, Azerbaijan, Colombia, Dominica, Georgia, Guyana, Jamaica, Lithuania, Mexico, Nigeria, Palau, the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Sierra Leone, Slovenia, South Africa and Sweden). Issue-specific youth policies, strategies, action plans, legislation and road maps have also been created, including with respect to youth employment (Egypt, El Salvador, Lithuania, Maldives and the Niger), sexual and reproductive health (Mexico and Thailand), entrepreneurship (Ethiopia) and comprehensive sexual education (Bulgaria). An increased focus on youth economic empowerment prompted the Niger to create the Ministry of Youth Entrepreneurship.

25. The United Nations system has provided policy support, resources or technical assistance to Member States that have developed or are currently developing national youth policies and related frameworks. Examples include Afghanistan's National Youth Policy (2014) and its National Youth Strategy and Action Plan 2016-2020 (elaborated with the technical and financial support of the United Nations through UNFPA) and a youth policy in the Dominican Republic (2016) (with contributions by the United Nations country team and the Office of the Envoy of the Secretary-General on Youth), which are first-time frameworks in the respective countries.

26. UNFPA, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), UNESCO and the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) supported the Government of Myanmar in developing an inclusive national youth policy, the country's first. In Somalia, the

United Nations country team and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia raised funds for the development of the national youth policy and are currently implementing the United Nations youth strategy, with support from the Office of the Envoy of the Secretary-General on Youth, which is a comprehensive programmatic response to the needs and aspirations of young people. Costa Rica adopted a rights-based national youth policy in 2015, for which the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) provided technical assistance. UNV and UNDP collaborated with the Government of India in the preparation of four action plans for the implementation of the National Youth Policy 2014.

27. UNESCO and other United Nations entities supported the elaboration of a national youth policy in Burundi and Mongolia, as well as the revision of the national youth policy in Zimbabwe. Through the European Union-funded Networks of Mediterranean Youth Project, UNESCO provided technical assistance to national youth organizations, relevant ministries and youth stakeholders to develop or revise their legal and political frameworks related to young people, including in Algeria, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia and the State of Palestine. Georgia developed a national youth policy (2014) with the support of UNFPA, along with an action plan (for the period 2014-2020) for its effective implementation. In Cambodia, UNPFA assisted the Government in developing a national youth action plan in order to operationalize the national youth policy.

D. Technical cooperation, events and research on youth policies

28. Research, technical cooperation, events and meetings are being undertaken by United Nations entities to encourage and support Member States in enhancing the development and implementation of youth policies. Legislative, policy and programming support was provided to assist Member States in their commitments to youth development and policies in line with the World Programme of Action for Youth, including by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), UNESCO and UNV. Efforts in respect of the training and capacity-building of young people have been a priority of United Nations entities, with their inclusion in various fields (United Nations Office on Sport for Development and Peace and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)). Efforts have also been made to build the capacities of Member States on concerns affecting young people, including on media and information literacy (UNESCO).

29. At the regional level, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs partners with Governments (Mexico), other United Nations entities (UNDP, UNESCO and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme), regional commissions (the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and ECLAC), intergovernmental entities (the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Pacific Community) and regional youth-led organizations (the Pacific Youth Council). The objective is to strengthen regional dialogue on youth policies and the 2030 Agenda among national Governments, national youth councils or the equivalent, youth-led civil society, national statistical offices and academic institutions. Capacity-building workshops on the cycle of youth policies and the importance of data and statistics have been held and, thus far, four regions or subregions (anglophone Africa, the Caribbean, the Pacific and Latin America) and 54 Member States have participated.

30. A Development Account project led by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) was implemented to strengthen the capacity of Governments in the ESCAP, ECA and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia regions in formulating inclusive and sustainable development policies. Under the project, an Asia-Pacific workshop on building capacity to develop youth policies was held in Bangkok in March 2016 and a youth policy toolbox to showcase policy and programme options, promote knowledge-sharing and provide technical advice is being developed. ECLAC carried out a project on social inclusion of young people in the region (from 2013 to 2015), which included an in-depth analysis of youth policies and their institutional frameworks. It also held a series of workshops on youth policies with representatives from national youth institutes.

31. To galvanize continued efforts on youth policymaking, Azerbaijan held the first Global Forum on Youth Policies in October 2014, supported by UNDP, UNESCO, the Office of the Envoy of the Secretary-General on Youth and the Council of Europe. The Forum provided a multi-stakeholder opportunity to assess the state of youth policies 20 years after the adoption of the World Programme of Action for Youth and resulted in the creation of guiding principles for integrated and inclusive youth policy development. To mark the twentieth anniversary of the Programme of Action, the President of the General Assembly organized a high-level event in May 2015.

III. Towards gender equality and the empowerment of girls and young women

32. In accordance with the World Programme of Action for Youth, a crucial task of youth policy is to improve the situation of girls and young women. Gender inequality can be deeply rooted in gender stereotypes, social norms, behaviours and attitudes which perpetuate disparities and unequal treatment of girls and young women. Efforts to change long-standing patterns of treatment should occur early on in the lives of young men and young women, in the spheres of education, community and social life, including through youth policy.

33. Several Member States enhanced efforts towards gender equality and inclusivity through the development and implementation of gender-specific policies, cross-sectoral policies, projects, programmes and legislation (Georgia, Swaziland, Sweden and South Africa). Early detection of differences in the needs and challenges of young women and young men, and measures promoting gender equality policy objectives, were a significant part of these policies (Sweden). Ensuring equal opportunities between men and women and preventing discrimination were identified as the main principles of such policies (Slovenia). Issue-specific policies and plans recognized the significant challenges that young women face in the labour market, including in relation to equal pay for equal work, co-responsibility in the domestic sphere and the sharing of care work between young men and young women (El Salvador).

34. Measures on gender equality and the empowerment of women can be meaningfully implemented when adequate financial allocations such as specific budgets for gender-specific policies and gender-responsive budgets for non-gender-

specific policies are in place (Sweden). In particular, policies that advance gender equality, including sexual and reproductive health policies, can help to reduce pervasive attitudes and gender discrimination. Ensuring the involvement of both young women and young men in policy development can further ensure that policies are best placed to alter such attitudes and positioned to promote behaviours, roles and responsibilities that advance gender equality.

35. The participation of girls and young women in policymaking allows them to advocate on their own behalf. At the same time, young men and boys play a critical role in ensuring gender equality and in transforming normative gender roles and relations. Policies and programmes should take into account the role that boys and young men play in advancing gender equality and promote alternative notions of gender, including masculinity. Such shifts are effective in changing attitudes and behaviours, including related to violence against women.

36. Monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth through indicators and data collection can be a means of assessing gender equality. In the report of the Secretary-General on the proposed set of indicators for the Programme of Action (E/CN.5/2013/8), gender equality was considered as a cross-cutting issue under each priority area and the importance of disaggregating data by gender was noted.

37. The promotion of gender equality remains a priority for numerous Member States and continues to be translated into national development efforts relating to young people, including in the fields of health, education, participation and employment. In Chile, a youth cabinet was established in 2015 as a space for participation, empowerment and training on topics that affect young people; the cabinet applies a quota system to ensure gender balance in regional elections to elect 155 young people. In Colombia, an amendment to Act 1622 allows for the unification of National Youth Council elections and permits young people, including those as young as 14 to 17 years old, to be elected as youth advisers. The Act specifies that 50 per cent of the list of candidates should comprise women, the first election processes in the country's history to ensure gender equity.

38. Sweden has undertaken measures to positively impact young people's living conditions within the framework of its gender equality policy, including to prevent sexual exploitation of young people via the Internet and other interactive media, to prevent and end forced marriage of young people, to foster educational efforts aimed at creating open and open-minded environments for young lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons and to develop knowledge and support for boys and young men. The promotion of gender equality is one of the fundamental goals of Chile's National Institute for Youth and all of its programmes incorporate a gender perspective. The Institute has also developed initiatives that include a specific gender perspective by targeting specific areas where it aspires to reduce the gender gap. Swaziland has supported a number of programmes on the empowerment of girls, in partnership with the United States Agency for International Development and the Global Fund, under the National Emergency Response Council on HIV and AIDS.

39. Member States committed to the promotion and implementation of age- and gender- appropriate programmes on health issues, including on reproductive health-care services (Chile and Palau). South Africa launched its National Adolescent

Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Framework Strategy (February 2015), which advances the protection of adolescents from coerced sexual experiences, exploitative sexual and reproductive relationships, sexual and gender-based violence, sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS, and related issues.

40. In the field of education, initiatives to educate young people about gender equality are ongoing (Chile). In Mexico, the National Council for the Prevention of Discrimination launched a self-study e-learning course on young people, tolerance and non-discrimination and the National Institute for Women held a course for adolescents to strengthen their knowledge about sexuality and social skills, with full respect for their sexual and reproductive rights.

41. United Nations entities actively supported the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of young women and girls in their policies and programming. The youth and gender equality strategy of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) highlights four key areas, specifically, young women's leadership; promoting the economic empowerment and skills development of young women; fostering action to end violence against young women and girls; and promoting partnerships with young women and young men to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women. UN-Women, together with the United Nations Inter-agency Network on Youth Development and partners, spearheaded the first-ever youth forum at the Commission on the Status of Women in 2016 focusing on gender equality in the context of the 2030 Agenda, which resulted in a youth declaration that was formally introduced at the General Assembly and mentioned in the outcome document of the sixtieth session of the Commission on the Status of Women. To nurture and provide support to young women's leadership and economic empowerment as outlined in the LEAP framework under the youth and gender equality strategy, UN-Women launched two coalitions (a global coalition of young women entrepreneurs for innovation and skills development (July 2016) and a coalition of young women leaders (August 2016).

42. United Nations entities worked to mainstream gender in all youth-related activities, publications and initiatives (ECLAC and UNESCO) and continue to highlight the need to mainstream a gender perspective in youth policies (ECLAC). Regarding initiatives focused on girls and young women, ECLAC held an expert group meeting to discuss the situation of girls and adolescents with disabilities in the region (November 2016) and prepared a joint ECLAC-UNICEF publication exploring the situation of girls and female adolescents in the region and presenting policy recommendations.

43. Entities continue to disseminate tools for gender equality and the empowerment of young women. UN-Women is producing a toolkit on working with boys and young men to change attitudes, norms and behaviours using experiential learning to achieve gender equality. Member States actively endorsed the UN-Women HeForShe campaign, including Canada, which committed to implementing the youth and gender equality strategy, and Mexico, which is complying with the campaign at the federal level. UNESCO continued to support Member States in their development, implementation and scaling-up of gender-responsive literacy policies, as well as in ensuring equal opportunities in respect of

diversified choices of learning and skills development for young girls at the post-primary level.

44. In 2015, UNDP, UN-Women and UNFPA, with funds from the Government of Sweden, launched the second phase of its Joint United Nations Programme for Gender Equality in Georgia, which focuses on the political and economic empowerment of women, the elimination of violence against women and the realization of the sexual and reproductive rights of the population. Initiatives and contests under this programme included a country-wide student essay contest. Funded by the Peacebuilding Fund, UNDP implemented a project in Kyrgyzstan under the theme "Youth for peaceful change", which was aimed at improving opportunities to acquire civic participation skills, creating better access to economic opportunities and creating opportunities for vulnerable young girls and boys to participate in decision-making at various levels.

IV. Youth participation

45. As key stakeholders, young people should be actively involved in the design, development and implementation of youth policies and programmes at all levels. Governments can ensure such involvement by fostering information-sharing and including young people in decision-making at all stages of the policymaking process. It is important that the engagement of the youth constituency be substantive and consistent.

46. The effective participation of young people in the consultative processes for the development, implementation and evaluation of national policies and plans affecting their lives enables those policies and processes to more accurately reflect their current needs and challenges. Young people's knowledge of the concerns of their constituency gives them unique insights that can inform the design of youth-related policies. With the tools and the empowerment to participate in policymaking, young people can make contributions leading to strategies that are more responsive to their needs, and their participation leads to policy frameworks that have greater legitimacy.

47. In their engagement with the United Nations, Member States stressed the importance of ensuring the active involvement of young people in decision-making and policy development (Austria, Azerbaijan and Canada). Numerous policy frameworks emphasize youth participation as a field of action (Austria and South Africa) or as a strategic framework objective (Austria, Colombia and South Africa). Consequently, Member States (Austria and Sweden) expressed that the involvement of young people should not be confined to youth-related policies but rather should be expanded to all policies that could have implications for them. Member States highlighted that they have or are developing mechanisms for youth participation in decision-making (Libya, the Republic of Korea and Sri Lanka). In the case of Sri Lanka, increasing the number of young women parliamentarians was a priority.

48. Member States and United Nations entities emphasized the importance of consultative processes with young people and youth-led organizations, including with national youth councils, to inform, design, revise and implement national youth policies (Austria, Azerbaijan, Burundi, Chile, Costa Rica, Georgia, Mexico,

Mongolia, Senegal, Slovenia, South Africa, Sweden and Uruguay). The decentralization policy of Swaziland allows for the participation of young people in the design, implementation and evaluation of policies and programmes in all sectors from the grass-roots level, including the participation of girls, as well as marginalized young people, such as those living with disabilities. Liberia's recent Equal Representation and Participation Bill allows young people to have their voices heard as potential members of parliament. Online consultations and outreach to young people were utilized and considered important tools for informing and engaging young people in decision-making processes, as well as receiving feedback on initiatives (Austria and Azerbaijan).

49. Several countries adopted legislation as a tool to promote youth participation in decision-making, including through advisory councils (Colombia, Slovenia and Switzerland). In addition, in order to foster the participation of young people in institutional structures, several countries initiated or are in the process of initiating municipal, regional or national participation mechanisms to engage on issues that affect their communities, such as youth parliaments or advisory bodies. These mechanisms contribute to the activities of the national assembly or parliament; examples include the Prime Minister's Youth Council (2016) (Canada), the Youth Policy Council (Sweden), the Youth Cabinet (Chile) and the Youth Regulating Council (Colombia).

50. In addition, Member States utilized large-scale consultations, surveys, events and forums carried out with young people and youth-led organizations to help inform their work, policies and decision-making processes and reflect the multifaceted and complex nature of challenges faced by young people (Libya, the Niger, the Republic of Korea and Sri Lanka). Several types of surveys and participatory processes were used to capture the views of young people, including during the design of policies such as the Youth Strategy on Tour and Open Delphi 4 Youth. In Mexico, the development of the national youth programme "Projuventud" was the result of a national youth consultation; its monitoring committee seeks accountability through specific actions engaging civil society, institutions working for young people and youth representatives. At the regional level, in the European Union, national consultations were held as part of the Structured Dialogue of the European Youth Strategy in order to involve relevant stakeholders and young people in the development of European youth policy. At the international level, numerous efforts have been made by United Nations entities to improve policies, mechanisms, processes and channels that support youth participation in decision-making processes at all levels, particularly in the context of the 2030 Agenda. UNDP is working with the Ibero-American Youth Organization on youth indicators for the 2030 Agenda review framework in the Latin America and Caribbean region.

51. United Nations entities continue to establish opportunities, mechanisms and processes to promote the participation of young people and youth-led organizations in their own activities and processes. An unprecedented number of Member States included youth delegates as part of their delegations to United Nations intergovernmental meetings, with more than 66 delegates from 37 countries attending the General Assembly. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs, which oversees the United Nations youth delegate programme, supported the participation of youth delegates in the aforementioned meetings. In 2016, Bolivia

(Plurinational State of), Canada, Chad, Czechia, Eritrea, Hungary and the United Arab Emirates launched youth delegate programmes, thereby encouraging youth participation in decision-making processes at the international level. Several countries, including Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden, sent delegates to the high-level political forum on sustainable development in 2016. That number will likely increase with the progressive implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

52. With regard to youth participation in major United Nations meetings, forums and assemblies, the Economic and Social Council Youth Forum continues to serve as a space and mechanism for dialogue among young people, Member States, civil society, United Nations entities and other partners, to specifically address the role of young people in the implementation and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda. A youth forum held during the ministerial segment of the fourteenth session of UNCTAD (July 2016) allowed young people to raise their concerns with global leaders participating in the session. The first-ever youth forum at the Commission on the Status of Women resulted in a youth declaration that was both formally introduced at the General Assembly and mentioned in the outcome document of the sixtieth session of the Commission. At the second session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, held in May 2016, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) brought together more than 100 youth representatives, providing them with an opportunity to influence the decisions of the United Nations body.

53. United Nations organizations emphasized their efforts related to the strengthening of youth participation and inclusion, such as the "Dialogue for the future: promoting coexistence and diversity in Bosnia and Herzegovina" project, a joint United Nations initiative on peacebuilding in Bosnia and Herzegovina implemented by UNDP, UNICEF and UNESCO, which entailed working with young people to create safe places for youth in decision-making processes. Events engaging citizens in policymaking were held (for example, "Diplohack Tbilisi" in Georgia) by UNDP and other partners. Another such event was the "Dialogue on strengthening the youth sector" of Bosnia and Herzegovina (February 2016), aimed at creating a platform for democratic dialogue as a tool to strengthen collaboration in order to improve planning and the implementation of youth policies and existing legislation. Training-of-trainers programmes were implemented in Burundi, focusing on nine themes, including participation in decision-making. Some 500 young people participated in the peer training programme and 2,500 young people benefited from mentoring by their peers (UNESCO).

54. Numerous barriers inhibit and restrict the participation and involvement of young people in decision-making processes. Often, the lack of space for participation or engagement or the inaccessibility of organizations to young people act as barriers to engagement. Impediments to youth participation can also relate to their means to participate individually or to the limited funds available to youth-led organizations. The involvement of young people is further impeded by their need to look for employment or continue their studies or their inability to be available on a full-time basis. Where gender inequality remains pervasive, young people can frequently be excluded from decision-making because of gender barriers. Support to young people and youth-led organizations in terms of funding and resources recognizes and promotes the importance of young people and enables them to build

capacity. It encourages more young people to join organizations and allows the organizations to fund participation in decision-making, when needed.

V. Inclusion of young people from marginalized groups

55. As a heterogeneous group, the youth constituency includes marginalized groups, who often require unique attention. Taking into account the social and economic circumstances in each country, indigenous youth, youth in rural areas, youth with disabilities and young migrants may be at greater risk of marginalization and social exclusion. Marginalization can have an impact on the ability of young people to meaningfully participate in social, economic, cultural and political spheres of society, including decision-making that affects them.

56. To reduce social exclusion and marginalization, policymakers can factor the concerns and needs of young people from marginalized groups into participatory processes, as essential stakeholders. Such participation can reinforce policy frameworks, given that it provides an opportunity for the distinctive views and needs of such young people to be considered and interwoven into the appropriate policy structures. The participation of disadvantaged and marginalized groups of young people can enable them to take ownership of the corresponding frameworks devised to remove barriers to their inclusion in society in the fields of education, employment, health and civic engagement.

57. Integrated youth policies that pay attention to the needs of marginalized populations, as well as the societal conditions that lead to vulnerability and generate social exclusion, can help to ensure their visibility, reduce inequalities perpetuated as a result of belonging to a certain group and supply the tools and skills required for them to influence their lives and their communities. Policies that support young people, particularly the poor and marginalized, are necessary to remove the additional systemic and institutional obstacles that limit their contributions and to ensure that their full potential is realized.

58. Additional targeted policies may be required to tackle the exclusion, discrimination and inequalities that certain groups of young people may face, empowering them to develop their full potential to lead dignified lives in their societies. The comprehensive social inclusion of marginalized young people requires concerted, holistic and cross-sectoral approaches in policy areas related to women, indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, refugees, migrants, young people in rural areas and the economically impoverished by ministries responsible for young people, employment, food and agriculture, housing, social affairs, public health, environment, law, transport and social welfare.

59. Rather than a one-time consultation, the inclusion of marginalized groups should be understood as a regular and continuous process with the involvement of the affected groups of young people and adequate resources to engage disenfranchised young people who are not necessarily connected within organized structures. Given that monitoring and evaluation are significant components of the implementation of youth policies, the proposed set of indicators for the World Programme of Action for Youth was designed to assist Member States in developing their own programmes for monitoring the implementation of the framework,

consistent with the national priorities for youth policy and the social and economic circumstances in each country, and can be tailored to include marginalized groups.

60. In their reporting, Member States indicated that the distinct concerns of marginalized groups are reflected in national youth policy and youth-related legislation (Austria, Azerbaijan and Swaziland). Legislation and corresponding policy frameworks further ensure that minority groups are represented in participatory mechanisms (Austria) and frameworks to combat poverty and discrimination (Lithuania and Switzerland).

61. Member States continue to focus on the vulnerabilities faced by marginalized groups in their programming, particularly regarding youth with disabilities, indigenous youth and young migrants. Regarding the inclusion of indigenous youth, in Sweden, Sami youth and Sáminuorra, an organization that supports them, are eligible to receive grants for their constituency. In Mexico, several actions for indigenous youth were undertaken for the education of indigenous children and young people, such as canteens and homes for indigenous children and scholarships for young students for the pursuit of higher education, and the National Institute of Indigenous Languages provided young people with interpreters to promote their access to justice. Sweden fostered inclusion through various measures, including by identifying and disseminating positive examples of how young civil society creates meeting places and networks between migrant youth and other young people. Member States highlighted the important role of access to quality education in reducing marginalization, given that it helps to prepare young people for active participation in society (Lithuania and Slovenia).

62. Throughout their work, United Nations entities supported efforts to translate the promotion of social inclusion and equality into action by addressing marginalized groups in their programming. As one of numerous projects taking into consideration marginalized young people, UNESCO, in collaboration with local partners, established youth information centres in Jordan and Lebanon (the countries that host the highest number of Syrian refugees), provided them with access to information and built their skills through capacity-building. With a view to ensuring wider and more informed youth participation, including among rural youth, in the development of the national youth policy, Mongolian authorities, the Mongolian Education Alliance and UNESCO developed workshops that strengthen young people's leadership and capacity to influence policymaking. Similarly, UNESCO developed the Linking Generations through Radio toolkit for radio producers working with children and young people. This resource has been translated into practice by the 32 African community radios that are part of the Swedish-funded extrabudgetary project "Empowering local radios through information and communication technologies".

63. UNIDO, in partnership with the Italian CRT Foundation, developed a project to harness the potential of young people as social entrepreneurs in the Euro-Mediterranean region and empower young women and men by strengthening their capacities to induce positive social change through entrepreneurship and innovative business solutions.

64. UNFPA held a global indigenous youth meeting on culturally safe approaches to HIV, harm reduction and the sexual health of young key populations from indigenous communities, and incorporated the results into a road map, for

indigenous youth councils, on access to sexual and reproductive health-care services for young key populations from indigenous communities. ECLAC published *Youth: realities and challenges for achieving development with equality* (2015), which analyses the health disparities among rural and urban as well as indigenous and non-indigenous young people and examines the challenges faced by young people with disabilities in the education and employment spheres. Given the importance of evidence-based policies, ECLAC further developed an online youth platform to provide up-to-date statistics that would enable policymakers to assess the situation of marginalized young people, where data exist, and strengthen the design of policies and follow-up.

VI. Multiplying efforts in the United Nations

65. The United Nations system continues to orient its efforts towards the meaningful inclusion of young people in society through actions and initiatives in, inter alia, education, employment, peacebuilding and volunteerism.

66. Since its formalization in 2010, the United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development has grown into a network of more than 40 entities under its permanent co-chair, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and its rotating co-chair (UNDP for 2015-2016 and UN-Women for 2016-2017). Civil society actively participates in the Network's working groups, which have been successful in carrying out work in relation to, inter alia, gender equality and peacebuilding.

67. The United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development is implementing the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Youth (Youth-SWAP), which remains a robust framework to enhance inter-agency collaboration on youth policies and programmes. A 2014 report provided an update on the process and the implementation of the Youth-SWAP during its first year at all levels. Following the successful 2015 pilot survey on youth employment and entrepreneurship outcomes, a full-scale survey was launched on all Youth-SWAP thematic areas for all United Nations country teams and the members of the Network. The survey and reporting process is facilitated by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and UNDP. It will guide further entity-based and joint programming to advance youth development.

68. To foster action on the issue at a time when sustained high levels of youth unemployment and poor-quality and low-paying jobs remain a critical concern globally, Werner Faymann was appointed as the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Youth Employment in August 2016. Mr. Faymann will work in collaboration with the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Office of the Envoy of the Secretary-General on Youth and the United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development on the challenge of youth unemployment, in order to support the realization of employment-related goals and actions under the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Youth, the World Programme of Action for Youth and the youth employment targets set out in the 2030 Agenda.

69. The Envoy of the Secretary-General on Youth, Ahmad Alhendawi, undertook 63 visits in 43 countries to advocate for countries to strengthen their youth outreach

and development endeavours, including the adoption of a comprehensive national policy on young people and cross-sectoral efforts for young people in their policymaking. In 2016, his office issued a progress report for the period 2013-2016 on the achievements of the four key pillars of its workplan, namely participation, partnerships, harmonization and advocacy. The United Nations Young Leaders for the Sustainable Development Goals — 17 global citizens recognized for their outstanding leadership in their efforts to achieve the Goals — were announced in September 2016 by the Office of the Envoy of the Secretary-General on Youth.

70. A Global Forum on Youth, Peace and Security was hosted by Jordan and co-organized by the United Nations on behalf of the United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development to discuss the vital role that young people play in sustaining peace. The Forum, which was held in August 2015, resulted in the Amman Youth Declaration on Youth, Peace and Security. In December 2015, the Security Council adopted resolution 2250 (2015) on youth, peace and security, in which it called for a progress study on the positive contribution of young people to peace processes and conflict resolution, in order to recommend effective responses at the local, national, regional and international levels.

71. Several United Nations entities developed and continued to implement internal strategies and internal task forces focusing on young people (UNDP, UNV and UN-Women). UNDP launched its new five-year Youth Global Programme for Sustainable Development and Peace, with the view that youth empowerment is both a human rights imperative and a smart investment in sustainable development and peace. The Global Initiative for Decent Jobs for Youth, launched at the Economic and Social Council Youth Forum in February 2016, was prepared under the leadership of ILO and brings together 21 United Nations entities in an effort to expand country-level action on decent jobs for young people through innovative interventions, knowledge and multi-stakeholder partnerships. In consultation with Governments, the initiative will coordinate employment and economic policies for job growth and social inclusion and protect labour rights to ensure that young people receive equal treatment.

72. With the aim of enriching the understanding of youth development and creating an extensive knowledge base on young people, a vast number of entities conducted research on issues such as youth employment, participation, volunteerism, information and communication technologies, school-related gender-based violence, green skills and lifestyles (ECLAC, ESCAP, ILO, the International Telecommunication Union, UNCTAD, UNEP, UNESCO, UNDP and UNV). Entities conducted extensive research, alone or in partnership with other entities or stakeholders, to examine the issues affecting young people and produced a variety of reports, policy briefs and technical papers to disseminate the issues. The United Nations continued its work to create accessible information for young people, including youth-friendly knowledge products and toolkits (UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO and UN-Women). Resources such as massive open online courses were created as tools to empower citizens, including young people (UNEP). In addition, campaigns and communications on issues affecting young people were a priority of United Nations organizations, including on reducing food waste (UNEP), wildlife protection (UNEP), gender equality (UN-Women) and the 2030 Agenda (UN-Women).

73. The flagship publication of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *United Nations World Youth Report: Youth Civic Engagement*, explored the participation of young people in economic, political and community life. The report responds to growing interest in and an increased policy focus on youth civic engagement among Governments, young people and researchers and provides thematic insights on economic, political and community engagement, coupled with expert opinion pieces so as to provide robust and varied perspectives. It is intended to serve as an impetus and tool for dialogue, policy discussion and action.

VII. Conclusion and recommendations

74. A comprehensive approach to youth policy often includes targeted as well as cross-sectoral efforts, continuous youth engagement, evidence-based approaches, and links to regional and global processes and priorities. Addressing issues and challenges faced by young people across all sectors of work comprises a focus on gender equality, youth participation and the inclusion of marginalized groups. Such approaches to policy-making contribute to the robustness of the resulting policies and their implementation and address inequalities within marginalized groups.

75. Taking into account the contributions received, the following actions are recommended to Member States:

(a) **Develop and strengthen existing evidence-based national policies for youth development and endorse coherent cross-sectoral efforts in line with the World Programme of Action for Youth and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as well as ensure the availability of adequate resources for implementation and the participation and inclusion of young people;**

(b) **Increase qualitative and quantitative research and data collection on the effectiveness of youth policies, including the impact of and approaches to youth policies, taking into account youth-led research and data collection where appropriate;**

(c) **Take concrete measures, such as establishing participatory processes, ensuring that the needs and voice of marginalized groups are included in policymaking, with the goal of leaving no one behind;**

(d) **Ensure gender equality for girls and young women, including enacting corresponding legislative and policy reform as appropriate.**